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I N S I D E

VIRTUE OF THE WEEK

REVERENCE

“May obedience conquer disobedience within this house, and may peace triumph over discord here, and generous giving over avarice, reverence over contempt.”

The Yasna 60:5

See Page 13

Local

CUC admits existence of MOA but...

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board chairman Herman P. Sablan has admitted the existence of a Memorandum of Agreement with a Korean firm on desalination project prior to solicitation, but said that it had been nullified when the utility firm issued a Request for Proposal over a month ago.

In an interview, Sablan said that an MOA was signed with Taekwang Heavy Industries because no other companies were interested in the project.

“When they first introduced the unsolicited proposal, the board made that decision, but then after that, other companies came in wanting to participate so we disregarded the MOA and proceeded with an RFP,” said Sablan.

This, after Saipan Rep. Stanley Torres delivered a privilege speech Thursday

questioning the method by which CUC was going about the project’s RFP process.

Torres, complete with a mask to illustrate what he said was “a smelly odor emitting” from some CUC board members while delivering his speech, disclosed that an MOA between CUC and Taekwang was prepared and must be executed sometime in July 2003, or before the RFP was requested publicly in September 2003.

The lawmaker claimed that the desalination contract was a “sweetheart deal” and that information on the dealings was privy only to some and not all CUC board members.

Torres moved last week for an oversight hearing on the project.

For his part, Sablan said that he wished that Torres had been “more professional,” even as he justified his position favoring Taekwang’s proposal.

Taekwang, among four proposers, was ranked No. 1 for its responsiveness by a

CUC evaluation team.

Sablan said that instead of criticizing the CUC, Rep. Torres should have directed his remarks to the government, particularly the Legislature, which he said, has done nothing to provide a 24-hour water supply on Saipan.

“He should have directed it to the government, to themselves because they have been there for a long time now but nothing has been done to fix the water supply problem,” he said.

Sablan’s bloc, composed of vice chair Frank Q. Guerrero and Laura Manglona, failed last week to pass a motion—an intent to approve the contract to Taekwang.

Three other board members voted against the proposal: Joseph Torres, Velma Palacios, and Rufina Miles.

Taekwang, according to authorities, would bind the CUC into a \$136.9-million deal for 15 years based on a \$7.98 per 1,000 gallons of water at 3 million gallons a day.

Wiseman allowed to sit on federal court bench

The U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit has allowed CNMI Superior Court judge David Wiseman to sit for the federal court bench on Saipan.

Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder made the designation for calendar year 2004.

“I hereby designate the Honorable David A. Wiseman from the Commonwealth Superior Court to hold district court in the [federal] district of the NMI during the period beginning January 1, 2004, and ending December 31, 2004, and for such additional time required in advance to prepare for the trial of cases, or thereafter as required to complete unfinished business,” Schroeder said.

The designation allows Wiseman to sit on the federal

court bench in lieu of Chief Judge Alex R. Munson’s unavailability. Wiseman has been sitting as judge on some cases pending before the federal court.

Some months ago, Wiseman also attended the National Judicial College, a non-profit judicial training center within the University of Nevada in Reno. The NDC had said in a media release that Wiseman served as discussion leader for the Criminal Evidence Course held at the college.

“The focus of Criminal Evidence is to provide judges with the knowledge to make evidentiary rulings quickly and confidently in criminal cases. Participants learn to summarize



Wiseman

the rules of relevancy; define the definitions for the admissibility of criminal evidence; define the rules regarding confessions and admissions; and compare hearsay exceptions,” stated the College.

According to NDC, it has awarded over 61,000 professional judicial education certificates, since it was founded in 1963. Offering about 85 courses yearly, it said over 2,700 judges from across the U.S. enroll annually.

The college’s thrust is to improve the administration of justice through national programs of education and training that will enhance judicial proficiency, competency and productivity. *(John Ravelo)*

PREL to broadcast in Asia

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning will broadcast educational programming to Asia by satellite. The Honolulu-based nonprofit has formed a strategic partnership, PRELSat, with Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation and Hawaii-Pacific Teleport.

Through PRELSat, the new partnership will deliver affordable distance learning to the Asia Pacific education community. More information about PRELSat is available online at www.prelsat.org.

With more than 10 years experience providing distance learning to a variety of clients, PREL has developed an extensive inventory of quality education programming. Through a delivery approach that combines distance learning with face-to-face support, PRELSat will provide customized learning packages to meet specific needs for both

formal and informal education. End-users include homes, communities, schools, and health centers.

Mabuhay Philippines Satellite Corporation, a unit of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, owns and operates the Agila II satellite. Hawaii-Pacific Teleport, which operates out of Kapolei, will provide uplink and turnaround services between the Americas and Asia.

With a footprint that covers Hawaii and most of Asia, Agila II can reach large numbers of end users in multiple locations. Satellite delivery provides affordable solutions for K-12 school systems seeking to complement classroom instruction or to provide standardized instruction and curricula to remote locations at any time of the day, month, or year. *(Pacific Magazine/PINA)*

Rain leaves Saipan wet

Occasional rain dampened Saipan’s roads yesterday, prompting the Emergency Management Office to issue a special weather advisory cautioning motorists.

Rain showers continued early last night, just as the EMO cited an afternoon forecast.

“A shear line is draped across the Mariana Islands, producing a band of scattered showers, heavy at times, and thunderstorms until this evening,” the advisory said. “Another near gale trade winds north and east

of Marianas will keep hazardous surf for our waters through at least Tuesday.”

The EMO cautioned motorists to be watchful of flooded areas, the slippery roads and low visibility during rainfall. As of press time, there was no major vehicular accident reported.

The EMO also cautioned fishermen and beachgoers to take extra precaution when going near the reef line due to dangerous surf and current. *(John Ravelo)*

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cmyk



UNITED NATIONS

Wearing their favorite costumes, Grace Christian Academy kindergarten students join the campus Mission Convention and United Nations parade Friday morning.

LIBERTY DONES

SGMA assists congressional group

Visiting congressional staffers were accommodated this past Thursday when Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association officials arranged for factory tours at SGMA member-companies, and then met with Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio who coordinated the visitors' schedule while on Saipan.

Christopher A. Foster, professional staff member, Office of Native American & Insular Affairs in the House Resources Committee, for Majority chairman Richard Pombo; and Anthony M. Babauta, Democratic legislative staff for Insular Areas with Minority House Rep. Nick Rahall toured United International Corporation and Sako Corporation.

Also on the tours were Washington Rep. Tenorio and Meredith Beaton of Podesta Mattoon, from Washington DC.

SGMA chairman James C. Lin and executive director Richard Pierce briefed the visiting delegation Wednesday night and Thursday during the tours on matters about the Saipan apparel manufacturing industry.

The latest Saipan Apparel Industry Report also was provided for the committee staffers' review.

At a Friday SGMA general membership meeting, Tenorio addressed the full association membership on matters in Washington and on the purpose of the House Resources Committee delegation's visit to Saipan.

Tenorio told the group that this visit—or possible future visits—is a prerequisite to any House Committee decision on the CNMI's attempt to seat a non-voting delegate in the House committee itself.

The CNMI Resident Representative further touched on subjects ranging from the current

status of minimum wage efforts in Washington DC, the committee delegate bill itself, possible changes in trade and tariff extensions to the CNMI, and further visits to the CNMI by the House of Representatives early next year.

The House delegation left Saipan on Friday, Nov. 14, 2003.

NMI fails to obtain investment grade rating for proposed \$40-million bond

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Due to the CNMI government's failure to achieve an investment grade rating, it has to pay additional interest costs of about \$19 million over 30 years with its proposed \$40-million land compensation bond.

The Commonwealth Development Authority presented this scenario as it informed Gov. Juan N. Babauta in a letter last month that it "will pursue the closing of a non-rated, uninsured general obligation bond."

This is a result of the CNMI's failure to obtain an investment grade rating from rating agencies, which CDA officials said was influenced by two deciding factors: the general fund deficit and unfunded liability of the retirement program.

"Until these issues are substantially addressed, CNMI cannot expect an investment grade rating for a G.O. bond," CDA executive director Mary Lou S. Ada and CDA board chairman Sixto K. Igisomar told the governor.

This, they said, even as all the rating agencies "were impressed with the progress that the CNMI had enjoyed despite some very negative external events."

Further, they said that "the inability to achieve an investment grade rating also prohibits



Ada

the CNMI from obtaining insurance on the bonds."

This will raise the interest costs substantially, they said.

Based on an underwriter's estimate, they said that the cost of a non-rated, uninsured bond would be \$18 million to \$19 million in additional interests over 30 years.

The CDA officials noted that the situation had been discussed with the Department of Finance, which they said concurred that "the cost increase is substantial, but it remains feasible."

They said that the only option to receiving the target rating involves a substantial amendment to the existing legislation to ensure "a sufficient, dedicated funding source to offset the negatives previously mentioned."

But they warned that this step would create a delay of one to two months following the

passage of any legislation.

"Given the immediate need for funding, CDA will pursue the closing of a non-rated, uninsured general obligation bond," they said.

The CDA hopes to close the bond middle of December 2003.

The Bond Act provides that the CDA, at the request and after consultation with the Marianas Public Lands Authority, is authorized to incur a debt of up to \$40 million in aggregate amount of general obligation bonds of the CNMI for the purpose of completing the acquisition of various parcels of land.

This, as MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider earlier expressed concern over the delay in the funding, saying that that the works involved in the preparation for land claim files may be jeopardized since they "are good for a certain point of time only."

"We may do it again, and this means new spending for the MPLA," said Hofschneider, adding that at least 70 land claim folders are now ready for offer pending the release of the bond money.

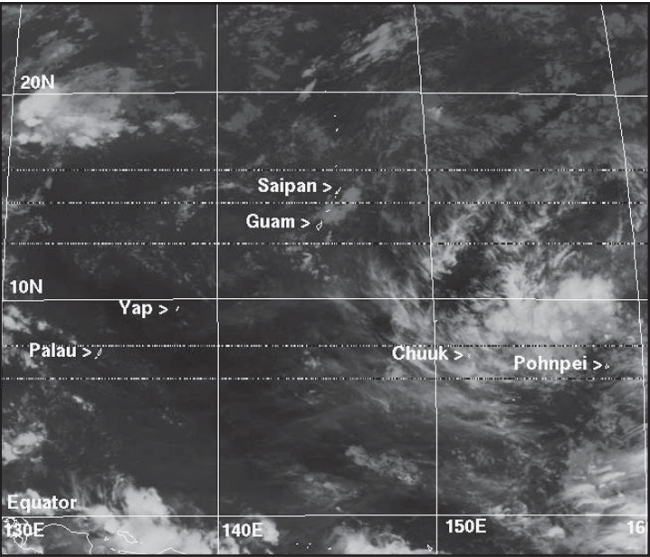
The MPLA had originally thought of getting land compensation money by December 2002.

Meantime, CDA noted that the CNMI rating of "middle double B area" is approximately two steps above Guam and two (steps) below the investment grade.

POKER

From Page 1


WEATHER FORECAST




PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M., DECEMBER 1, 2002
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.
A monsoon trough stretches across Micronesia and extends from near 7n130e southeastward to near 4n140e to 7N155e to a circulation near 4n166e and continues to 3n180. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough and the circulation can be found between 7n and 10n from 150e to 160e and between the Equator and 7n from 158e to 180. This area includes portions of Chuuk and Pohnpei States...Kosrae States...and southern portions of the Republic of the Marshall Islands as well as the Northwestern Kiribati.
The remnants of an old shear line are producing an area of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms well to the northwest of Palau and Yap near between 12n and 15n from 130e to 132e.




SAIPAN & TINIAN
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 15 mph. with gusts to 25 mph.
Temperature: Highs near 87. Lows near 77.




GUAM & ROTA
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers
Winds: East @ 15 mph. with gusts to 25 mph.
Temperature: Highs near 87. Lows near 77.




PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 10 kt.




POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 10-15 kt.




YAP & ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East @ 10-15 kt.






















KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers & isolated thunderstorms.
Winds: Northeast @ 10 kt.



CHUUK
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 10 kt.



MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast @ 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Cloudy	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
 Beijing	Partly Cloudy	50F (10C)	34F (1C)
 Hong Kong	Rain	79F (26C)	71F (22C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	83F (28C)	67F (19C)
 London, England	Rain	47F (8C)	39F (4C)
 Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	66F (19C)	47F (8C)
 Manila	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	74F (23C)	55F (13C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	78F (26C)	68F (20C)
 New York City	Partly Cloudy	40F (4C)	31F (-1C)
 Osaka	Rain	52F (11C)	40F (4C)
 Paris	Rain	47F (8C)	35F (2C)
 Pusan	Sunny	56F (13C)	40F (4C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	57F (14C)	40F (4C)
 Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	46F (8C)	34F (1C)
 San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	45F (7C)
 Seoul	Partly Cloudy	49F (9C)	39F (4C)
 Tokyo	Rain	53F (12C)	50F (10C)
 Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	34F (1C)

Theories cropping up on Torres’ office raid

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

“I won’t be surprised if I’m next.”

Thus said opposition senator Pete Reyes, who joined House Rep. Stanley Torres in accusing new Attorney General Pamela Brown of plotting the raid on the congressman’s offices Thursday noon.

Like Torres, Reyes and his



Reyes

bloc at the Senate have been critical of the new AG.

When Reyes’ group took over the Senate leadership months ago, it junked the committee report endorsing the confirmation of Brown as AG.

But soon after Senate President Paul Manglona regained actual majority number at the Upper House after the elections, his bloc adopted the same committee report in a session on Rota without the presence of Reyes’ group. Reyes had questioned the validity of Brown’s confirmation.

Reyes said he is exploring the possibility of initiating a legal move to unseat Brown, who was recently sworn into office by CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel Demapan.

“I personally feel that this [raid on Torres’ offices] is a retaliation from Pam Brown [against] people who are vocal against her,” Reyes said. “I won’t be surprised if I’m next, but I welcome any inquiry.”

The opposition senator stressed, though, that Brown’s office would not be able to find any wrongdoing on how he conducts his office.

Operatives from the AGO and the Office of the Public Auditor, together with some policemen, raided Torres’ offices at the Legislature to collect evidence over the congressman’s alleged employment of a ghost worker.

The allegation against Torres is similar to the fraudulent scheme that led to the conviction and imprisonment of ex-senators Ricardo Atalig and Jose M. Dela Cruz. Operatives conducted the raid Thursday noon shortly after obtaining a search warrant from

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo.

Reyes pointed out that the raid was conducted just days after the chief justice swore Brown in as AG, branding the raid as “pure retaliation.”

He clarified, though, that he did not meet with his party mates—including Thomas Villagomez—whose name had cropped up in the controversy involving Atalig and Dela Cruz. Villagomez had allegedly hired Atalig’s wife, Rosita, who reportedly did not perform actual work.

Brown tersely denied having knowledge of the raid.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton also belied Torres’ allegation that Brown had a hand in the raid, saying the OPA began its independent investigation even before Brown became AG. According to Hutton, the OPA just recently turned in the outcome of the investigation to the AGO.

Hutton and Assistant Attorney General Karen Severy co-signed the affidavit by OPA criminal investigator Richard Lamkin, which became the basis for the issuance of the search warrant on Torres’ offices.

Lamkin accused Torres of employing Dorothy Sablan as a ghost employee. He said Sablan received CNMI paychecks via direct deposit to the Bank of Guam and the First Hawaiian Bank.

“Investigation reveals that Dorothy Sablan has been paid for at least 280 hours of work recorded as if she was on-island even though she was off-island without being on administrative, annual or sick leave time,” Lamkin stated in the affidavit.

Sablan, Torres’ former office manager, had also allegedly illegally received government monies pertaining to 16 hours of holiday pay, according to Lamkin.

Lamkin said there is probable cause to believe that the crimes committed were: theft by deception, fraud, official misconduct, conspiracy to commit theft/fraud and obstruction of justice. The investigator also cited possible violations of the CNMI Ethics Act.

Lamkin disclosed that the investigation stemmed from an anonymous telephone call made to the OPA last Aug. 20, just days after the sentencing of Atalig to 63 months in federal imprisonment. He said the caller tipped that Sablan was receiving full-time pay as if she was working in the CNMI, even if she had spent the previous two months in Seattle.

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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Science in a humbler state

At the end of 2000, science was swollen with the self-importance of a century that ended with the remarkable mapping of the chemical codes that make up human DNA. Old scourges such as cancer suddenly seemed conquerable.

By contrast, 2003 is likely to be remembered as the year when science came back to earth.

To be sure, last year saw plenty of good research and discovery. Look no further than a paper published today in the British journal *Nature*. It offers tantalizing evidence that a human skull and jawbones recently found in China—the oldest well-preserved primate fossil ever discovered—may mean that remote human ancestors originated not in Africa but in Asia.

However, the year was inarguably framed more by setbacks than achievements. The disappointments were symbolized by the explosion of the space shuttle *Columbia* in February and by the swooning of a reproduction of the Wright brothers' first airplane into a mud puddle in December. Americans may have set foot on the moon more than three decades earlier, but they had not yet mastered safe and cost-effective ways of leaving Earth.

Most of the year's discoveries were not mind-bending new revelations but rather modest, incremental bits of progress.

For instance, the second most important discovery listed for the year by *Science* magazine was the announcement by scientists in Melbourne, Australia, that a particular genetic variation can increase people's risk of depression under certain types of stress. It became clear in 2003 that merely possessing a map of the chemical sequences in human DNA was not magically empowering. Without knowledge of how those genes interact with their environments, scientists are left struggling for their bearings, much like an ancient mariner with a treasure map of an island in a sea that had not yet been discovered.

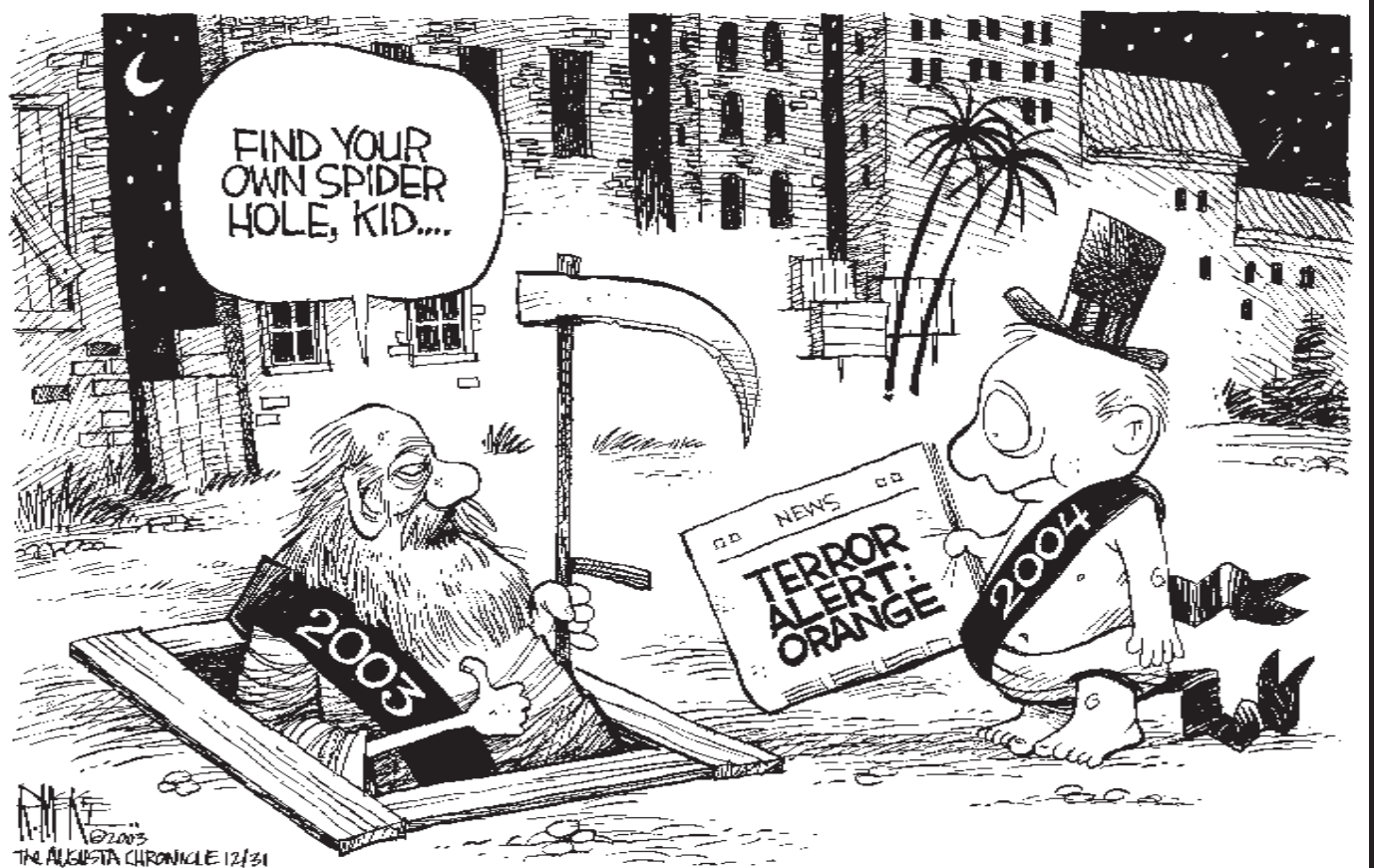
As *Science* magazine Editor Donald Kennedy recently admitted, 2003 was also "a vintage year for scientific fluffs."

Equally profound problems afflicted technology in 2003, the worst year ever for computer worms and viruses. When the SoBig worm in August became the fastest-spreading PC germ in history, for instance, reports initially pinned the blame on technological terrorists. The real culprits turned out to be more mundane but perhaps more alarming: spammers. SoBig had been engineered by junk e-mailers hoping to make a buck by turning infected computers into portals for sending out advertisements.

Even what the editors of *Science*, as well as most other science journalists, identified as the year's single most significant discovery serves as a reminder of how little we know about the cosmos we live in. Cleverly discovered new evidence indicates that 96% of the universe is composed of "dark matter" and "dark energy" that we cannot see and do not understand.

Finally, 2003 saw a welcome acknowledgment of widespread public concern that not only the space shuttle but the conduct of science itself might be careening out of control. That troubling possibility was broached in an eloquent report released in October by the White House. Written principally by Leon Kass, the chairman of President Bush's Council on Bioethics, the report posed a series of provocative questions.

Los Angeles Times



Urban legends are infectious

By ANDREW NOYMER

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Soft bubblegum has a secret ingredient that keeps it chewy: spider eggs.

Not really. But when I was a kid, that was the word on the street. This is a classic example of an urban legend. After a while, we stopped believing it, but we kept hearing it from other kids.

What distinguishes urban legends from garden-variety rumors is staying power. Rumors come and go every day, but urban legends keep circulating.

Such as this one: The child actor who played Mikey in the Life cereal commercials died after ingesting a lethal combination that exploded in his stomach: Coca-Cola and Pop Rocks, the effervescent candy that has enjoyed cyclical success over the years. Thanks to its pervasive and persistent spread, this one is a legendary urban legend; today, it practically has a cult following on the Internet.

How do these rumors survive and continue to spread, especially after individuals eventually realize they are bunk?

Social scientists call the process a "micro-macro disconnect." At the micro level—the individual level—we hear a rumor, we believe it for a while, spread it a little during that time, but then eventually we come to accept that it is false. But at the macro level—the societal level—the rumor just keeps on spreading. This seems paradoxical, given that society is, after all, a collection of individuals. But in this sense, a spreading rumor is a lot like an epidemic disease.

Think of it this way: If someone has heard a rumor and believes it, she is "infected" by it. If she tells her friends, she is "contagious." Sooner or later, wisdom or common sense takes hold, and like a child who recovers from chickenpox, she is "immune."

This is more than just a cute analogy. Computer models of a

disease can be adapted, with remarkably few modifications, to study the paradox of persistent rumors. My work in this area suggests an explanation of the urban legend puzzle.

Age is a key—and not just because children are more credulous than adults. After all, there are urban legends among adults, too (such as the one about the shopper who is cheated when buying a cookie recipe at a department store and gets revenge by spreading the recipe via e-mail).

Age comes into play because, over time, there are always new people entering a "group" through aging. For example, every fall there is a new batch of third-graders worried about Pop Rocks. Or, every day, there is a new cohort of uninitiated and trusting people getting an e-mail account for the first time. Whatever their biological age, these e-mail "newbies" are uninitiated and more likely to place trust in the new medium.

In my models, the most tenacious rumors achieve an age equilibrium, which means the rumor believers belong to a well-defined age range, be they children or adults. As these people age, or gain more experience, they cease to believe the rumor but are replaced, through aging, by a new crop of believers (and rumor-spreaders).

Medical science would like to find a vaccine for the common cold, but since the virus changes so often it's a tough job. Something similar is true with urban legends, which, like the common cold virus, are mutable. And like the common cold, they will be with us for some time to come.

Medical science's approach to the problem of disease is vaccination, making people immune before they experience the disease. With urban legends, most people become immune the old-fashioned way: through experience.

Noymer is a graduate student in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Mathematicians relish the quest

By **FERNANDO Q. GOUVEA**

LOS ANGELES TIMES

It took hundreds of thousands of computers and several years of work, but they got it.

“They” are the participants in the Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search. “It” is one more very large prime number, a monster with 6 million digits, part of a sequence of numbers known as “Mersenne primes” that is expected (but not known) to go on forever.

As mathematical achievements go, this one was fairly minor. It required no theoretical innovation, no conceptual leap; time, persistence, the Internet and lots of computers were enough.

Finding a new Mersenne prime confirms the expectation that it was there to find, but does not give us much more than that. As one of the people involved said last month when the discovery was announced, “It’s a neat accomplishment, but it really doesn’t have any applicability.”

Many great mathematical quests are like this. They are exciting adventures of the mind whose completion takes years of effort by whole communities of mathematicians but whose results are not usually of immediate practical use. This may come as a surprise, since our teachers spent a lot of time telling us that mathematics is important because it is useful. But that wasn’t the whole story.

Perhaps the best-known example is Fermat’s Last Theorem, scribbled in the margin of an old book around 1636 and finally proved by Andrew Wiles in 1994. Fermat wrote that he had found a “marvelous proof” of a negative statement: If you take a whole number and raise it to some power greater than two, he said, it is not possible to write that number as the sum of two nonzero numbers raised to the same power. So, say, 20,736,

which is 12 to the fourth power, cannot be written as a sum of two (nonzero) numbers to the fourth power.

A nonmathematician might wonder why anyone would want to prove that. But not only did people want to, they spent 350 years trying. During those years, many mathematicians put together a vast theoretical edifice dealing with such exotic beasts as “elliptic curves,” “modular forms” and “Galois representations.” The theory served as the base camp from which Wiles set out to get to the peak. It was an impressive conquest, and the methods are proving to be fruitful indeed, but as far as we know the whole thing has no practical use.

In the 20th century, much effort was directed at solving the “Hilbert Problems.” German mathematician David Hilbert listed these at the International Congress of Mathematicians in 1900 as prime targets for mathematical research. Most of the problems, which were more like broad questions than like the problems one finds in textbooks, had no direct applicability. Can arithmetic contradict itself? Can one find a general method to figure out whether it is possible to find whole-number solutions to equations? Is every even number the sum of two prime numbers? Hilbert’s personal prestige guaranteed that solving one of his problems would establish one’s fame.

The Clay Mathematics Institute has followed Hilbert’s lead in the 21st century, even putting up some prize money: \$1 million for the solution of each of seven mathematical problems. Of the seven, two are related to physics, one comes from computer science and the other four are purely mathematical. One of the latter four (asking for a proof of the “Riemann Hypothesis,” which, if true, will help in the understanding of prime numbers) was also on Hilbert’s list, reminding us that sometimes a century of work isn’t enough.

Many other such projects, past and present, have guided

mathematical research. Mathematicians usually call them “conjectures.” Based on known results, special cases, numerical computations and a general sense of how things are bound to be, conjectures are visions of the future and challenges to current scholars. Some turn out to be false (one of mine just did), but even the false ones prove their worth if they guide people to the right questions and to powerful new methods.

Much of this work has no practical application whatsoever, or at least none is known. But appearances can be deceiving. Non-Euclidean geometries had been studied and developed for half a century with no known application when Einstein arrived and put them to use (by recognizing that the right way to understand gravitation was to postulate a curved space-time. In the 1930s, G.H. Hardy famously boasted that none of his work would ever have practical applications; today, ideas closely related to Hardy’s are used in cryptography.

Still, what motivates mathematicians is not necessarily the potential for applications. When asked why they do what they do, some resort to George Mallory’s answer: “Because it’s there.” Perhaps John F. Kennedy’s explanation is even closer: “We . . . do these things . . . because they are hard.” At the core, however, is the desire to know and understand, to track the monsters to their lairs, to see how ideas fit together and why.

It may be of no practical use to know the answers to the questions that drive mathematical research. In fact, some of the questions may even be beyond our capacity to answer. But most mathematicians would agree with British mathematician E.C. Titchmarsh: “If we can know, it surely would be intolerable not to know.”

Gouvea is a professor of mathematics at Colby College.

Letters to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

Replacing greatness with mediocrity

In November 2003, several conservative Republicans in the U.S. Congress thought that the likeness of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the American dime should be replaced by Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States. Shortly thereafter, the Ronald Reagan Dime Act was presented in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 21, 2003.

Subsequent to the creation of the Dime Act, Rep. Tom Lantos, a Democrat from California and Holocaust survivor who came to the U.S. after WWII when he won a scholarship by writing an essay about FDR, called the GOP coin idea, “a pathetic, ideological, right wing move”. Other prominent people including Reagan’s wife are against the idea as well. In an interview with the Monterey Herald on December 6, 2003, Nancy Reagan voiced her opposition to the change with, “I do not support this proposal and I am certain Ronnie would not”. When our country chooses to honor a great president such as Franklin Roosevelt by placing his likeness on our currency, it would be wrong to remove him and replace him with another. It is my hope that the proposed legislation will be withdrawn”.

The U.S. presidents who were chosen to be placed on American coins have all made significant contributions while in office. Abraham Lincoln was responsible for freeing the slaves with his Emancipation Proclamation; Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence; George Washington was an American Revolution hero and lead the Continental Congress to give independence from England to the American colonies; John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corp and Alliance for Progress which was the Latin American version of the Marshall Plan.

Out of all the presidents on U.S. coins, the one who made the most impact on the country and American people was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. His ability to improve the country domestically and create an image of the White House with the international community as a “center of diplomatic initiative” contributed to winning an unprecedented four terms as president of the United States. He died in his last term in office. Immediately following his death, the law was changed to allow presidents to hold office for no more than two terms.

The most significant contribution that Franklin Roosevelt made

as president was the creation of the “New Deal”. Roosevelt’s New Deal incorporated numerous programs and acts, e.g., Social Security, National Labor Relations Board, Securities and Exchange Commission, Fair Labor Standards Act, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Good Neighbor Policy regarding Latin America, that enabled the U.S. to provide relief, recovery, and sufficient reform from the Stock Market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that subsequently followed during the early 1930s.

Roosevelt took a country literally in economic shambles and restored the health and confidence of all Americans during his sixteen years in office. His intelligence and genuine concern for the struggling working class in America made him one of the most respected and revered presidents to ever hold office.

Roosevelt’s leadership during WWII was exemplary and during the Yalta Conference with Winston Churchill of England and Joseph Stalin of Russia, he was regarded by the international community as a consummate statesman and highly intelligent diplomat.

Ronald Reagan took office during the early 1980’s and inherited rampant unemployment and a country plagued with economic inflation that was a consequence of the end of the Vietnam War. During his two terms in office, he approved of massive tax cuts to bring the country around economically.

The American economy did not improve significantly under Reagan’s leadership for two terms because the national debt rose from \$908 billion to a staggering \$2.6 trillion in 1988. In addition, the Reagan presidency was marred by the Iran-Contra affair, a political scandal that turned public attention to the effectiveness of Reagan’s hands-off management style and not being cognizant that the people within his own administration approved of the sale of arms to rogue countries that were known to harm Americans. This damaged Reagan’s strong reputation with the American people and diminished his credibility as a credible leader by many of the political pundits and elected officials in Congress.

Subsequent Reagan’s two terms in office, the unemployment rate for the U.S. continued to skyrocket. George H. Bush was unable to reverse the damage from the high unemployment rate and incredibly high national debt created by Reagan, and as a result, lost his second bid to be president in 1991.

Looking in retrospect involving American coins, it becomes apparent that the norm to place a president on a coin involves a considerable number of years subsequent to their death. For example, George Washington was placed on the quarter in 1932 approximately 200 years after he was born. Abraham Lincoln was placed on the penny in 1909, approximately 100 years after his birth. Thomas Jefferson was not placed on the nickel until 1938. The only president who was placed on an American coin immediately was John F. Kennedy. His likeness was placed on a 50-cent piece in 1964. Presidential experts agree that his accomplishments during his brief term in office prior to his assassination lead to the abrupt approval of Congress to place his likeness on the American half dollar.

The conservative Republicans in Congress want Reagan on the dime because Democrats have Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Kennedy on various coins. They feel it is only fair since Lincoln is the only other Republican who is on an American coin.

Presidential scholars and critics believe that this assertion is ludicrous primarily because it has nothing to do with the “political party” of the president as it does the “greatness” and contributions made while president to determine if he should be worthy and chosen to be placed on an American coin.

Federal law permits the U.S. Treasury to change the dime without congressional action, because it has the authority to redesign any coin that has been in circulation for more than 25 years. However, Congress can still order a change.

To remove the likeness of a truly great and profound president from the American dime who was responsible for giving the country prosperity and the people hope during the worst economic period in the history of the United States and replacing it with a president who made no significant contributions to the economy or people of America; and because the conservatives in Congress consider him to be a “Republican icon”, would be catastrophic simply because the president they desire to replace Roosevelt is a far cry from being “great”, as well as a deserving “American presidential icon”.

Dr. Jesus Camacho

Delano, California

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BOE OKs
Inos pay hike

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Board of Education has unanimously approved to increase education commissioner Rita H. Inos’ annual pay from \$70,000 to \$80,000 effective today.

Board members said Inos’ pay increase is long overdue.

“It should have been done long time ago but it kept being postponed due to funding availability,” said BOE chairman Herman T. Guerrero.

Member Marja Lee Taitano, who moved to have the increase take effect Dec. 14 rather than Dec. 28, said Inos deserves an even bigger payhike.

“She has bigger responsibilities than Northern Marianas College president Kenneth Wright and yet he gets a higher pay,” Taitano said. Wright was hired in August 2002 for \$90,000. Both have doctorate degrees.

“PSS is the biggest government agency. We have certainly more students than NMC,” said Guerrero.

Inos is now on her fifth year as education commissioner. She was first hired for a four-year term in 1998 and was retained by the current board in May 2002 for another four years.

Her rehiring came a few months following her failed election bid for a Lt. Governor position in the 2001 elections.

Inos is seen as “very hardworking and a competent person to handle PSS.”

Inos, who took a leave of absence for about five months this year for medical purposes, returned to PSS in September.

Speak Mandarin
program at NMC

Northern Marianas College will be offering courses in the Second Language Certificate program, conversational Mandarin Chinese course and Creative Writing course in Spring 2004.

Second Language
Certificate program

- LN 220 Introduction to Linguistics on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5pm to 6:25pm
- LN 240 TFL/TSL Theory and Methodology on Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm.

Conversational
Mandarin
Chinese course

- CN 100 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7pm to 8:25pm.

Creative Writing
course

- EN 201 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30pm to 7:55pm.

E-Card to be issued to Filipino workers

The Philippine Consulate General announced Saturday that a delegation from Manila—composed of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and Equitable officials—will be on Saipan from Dec. 17 to 18, 2003.

The team will conduct an information campaign about the various programs of the Philippine government for overseas Filipino workers in the Northern Marianas. These programs include OWWA’s Voluntary Membership Program and the Electronic Identification card, or E-Card.

The E-Card serves as permanent identification for overseas Filipino workers who have undergone processing at the POEA, as well as those who are active OWWA members. The E-Card can also serve as an Overseas Employment Certificate; it can help facilitate claims for OWWA benefits; and it may also be used as an international ATM card.

An active OWWA member who wishes to be issued an E-Card must fill up an application form and submit a 2x2 colored photo. The E-Card will be issued free of charge. Those who are not yet members of OWWA are urged to apply for membership, while those who have inactive accounts are also urged to file for a renewal.

The Manila delegation will be at the Philippine Consulate General’s Filipino Workers Resource Center on the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe on Dec. 2003 from 8am onwards.

The Philippine Consulate General is inviting all Filipino workers on Saipan to the FWRC to avail of this opportunity. For additional information, call the Philippine Overseas Labor Office at 235-3411, or the OWWA-Saipan office at 235-6992.

microl
oh yeah
+red

Business

Greenspan defends himself on '90s bubble

By JEANNINE AVERSA
AP WRITER

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan defended himself Saturday against a criticism of his tenure, saying policy-makers would have damaged the economy in the late 1990s had they tried to burst that era's speculative stock market bubble.

"The notion that a well-timed incremental tightening could have been calibrated to prevent the late 1990s bubble while preserving economic stability is almost surely an illusion," Greenspan said in a speech to the American Economic Association's annual meeting in San Diego. A copy of his remarks was distributed in Washington.

Greenspan previously has defended the Fed's handling of the high-flying stock market late in the Clinton administration. In Saturday's speech, he said the Fed correctly focused policies on trying to mitigate probable damage from the eventual bursting of the bubble of stock market speculation.

"There appears to be enough evidence, at least tentatively, to conclude that our strategy of addressing the bubble's consequences, rather than the bubble itself, has been successful," Greenspan said. "Despite the stock market plunge, terrorist attacks, corporate scandals and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, we experienced an exceptionally mild recession" in 2001.

Some critics have argued that the central bank made a major policy mistake by failing to curb stock prices as they soared. The bubble finally collapsed in the spring of 2000, wiping out trillions of dollars in paper wealth.

For the Fed to have influenced the level of stock

prices significantly during the boom, Greenspan said, short-term interest rates would have had to have been ratcheted up high enough to risk severe damage to the economy.

Greenspan did not address in his speech the future course of short-term interest rate policy or the direction of the U.S. economy.

"Essentially I think this speech says 'We have learned much about monetary policy-making, and we have applied our lessons well,'" said economist Ken Mayland, president of ClearView Economics.

Greenspan, in answering questions after the speech, downplayed the potential risk of a new stock price bubble emerging now that the economy is getting stronger.

"My own sense is that we don't have to worry too much about the emergence of real bubbles again for a while because I think it takes a number of years for the trauma of the collapse to wear off," Greenspan said.

Amid signs the economy is gaining traction, economists believe Fed policy-makers will hold a key short-term rate at a 45-year low of 1 percent at their first meeting of this year on Jan. 27-28. Some analysts believe the Fed could begin to nudge rates upward as early as June. Others believe, however, that rates will stay where they are into 2005.

Many economists also believe the Fed's credit-easing campaign that started in January 2001 and saw the last cut in June 2003 probably has ended.

Greenspan said the Fed had been able to cut short-term rates so aggressively because inflation posed no threat to the economy. In fact, as the economy struggled to recover in the first half of last year, Fed policy-makers worried more about prices

moving down, into deflation, rather than up, into inflation.

"We thought we needed to be, and could be, forceful in 2002 and 2003 as well because, with demand weak, inflation risks had become two-sided for the first time in 40 years," Greenspan said.

As he has in the past, Greenspan rejected the use of a device called "inflation rate targeting," which is used by some central banks. Using the tactic, a central bank sets an optimal target for inflation for the year, then manages interest

rate policy to achieve that goal.

Greenspan said he preferred a more flexible approach to policy-making.

"Simple rules will be inadequate as either descriptions or prescriptions for policy," he said.

Separately, Fed policy-maker Ben Bernanke, in a Saturday speech to the same group, suggested some ways that the central bank might be able to improve the way it communicates with Wall Street and Main Street.



Greenspan

Bernanke suggested, among other things, that the Fed's economic forecasts be released more often than the current twice a year and minutes of the Fed's meetings be released quicker. The minutes are now released six to eight weeks after a meeting.

However, Bernanke didn't believe that televising the Fed's eight meetings a year on interest rate policy would be a good idea. Doing so, he said, would "risk comprising the integrity and quality of the policy-making process itself."

Official: Plant mislabeled animal feed

A Canadian rendering plant being investigated in connection with the mad cow disease scare in the United States once mislabeled animal feed, but the error posed no risk of spreading the deadly infection, a federal official said Friday.

Sergio Tulusso, feed program coordinator with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, said the mislabeling did not result in any penalty to Northern Alberta Processing, which runs the Edmonton, Alberta plant.

Tulusso said that the case involved a cattle-feed product made from chicken feathers that was found to contain hogs hair, both considered safe as cattle feed.

"If memory serves me ... it may just have been a misunderstanding about how

they were supposed to label this particular product," he said.

Canadian officials are investigating whether the Northern Alberta Processing provided contaminated materials to mills that mixed feed for Alberta farms where two infected cows have originated. One of the cows was found on a Washington state farm last month. The other mad cow case was discovered in Canada in May.

But U.S. and Canadian officials said it is far too early to know whether they have found the source of the infection and cautioned they may never be able to pinpoint a batch of feed or a plant.

Several countries banned U.S. beef following the discovery of the Washington case. (AP)

bank of guam

First sessions may set tone for stocks

By HOPE YEN
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Wall Street rode out 2003 on a wave of optimism this past week as upbeat investors bet that the economic rebound will accelerate. But analysts say the next few trading days may be more telling since early January gains historically bode well for the rest of the year.

The main gauges notched their first winning year since 1999 Wednesday after investors shook off mad cow fears and kept their faith in a strong recovery. But the celebration appeared to cool Friday, the first trading day of 2004, after stocks lost momentum and closed mostly lower.

However, analysts noted that volume was very light during the holiday week, accentuating price swings. As a result, the more critical test will be in the coming week when investors return from the holidays and digest scheduled reports on construction spending and factory orders.

"We don't think too much" of the past week's trading, but more on "when we get back from the holiday on Monday or Tuesday," said John Caldwell, chief equity strategist for McDonald Financial Group. "Folks are looking for signs of economic health."

"Durable goods orders from the last month weren't all that great, and people are still looking for the jobs recovery. That will be more important for the market," he said.

There are historical reasons for keying in on the coming week's trading. The January barometer, as it's known, dictates that if the first five days on average finish higher, then investors can expect gains for the month and entire year.

Early January gains led to yearly



Traders and Specialists work the trading floor at the New York Stock Exchange on the first trading day of the year 2004 Friday.

AP

advances each year since 1950, with the exception of five times, according to the Stock Trader's Almanac.

In the next few days, "investors will be discounting for the entire year. Everyone is sitting down and making their forecasts for 2004," said Robert Streed, portfolio manager of Northern Trust Select Equity Fund. "And for the most part, investors tend to be right and their bets early in the year will probably carry through."

If some analyst forecasts are right,

January may post more modest gains than average.

January typically is the second strongest month of the year, ranking just behind December as investors put year-end bonuses and dividends to work. Since 1939, the Standard & Poor's 500 index has posted a median return of 1.5 percent in January.

But Russ Koesterich, U.S. equity strategist at State Street Corp. in Boston, said January gains tend to be more modest following a strong yearly market

performance such as in 2003, when the S&P 500 gained more than 25 percent.

In those cases, the S&P only rose an average of 0.38 percent in January, he said. One reason might be that during strong market years, investors often wait until January to sell stocks so they can defer tax payments until the following year.

"Historically, a big gain in the prior year appears to steal some of January's traditional strength," Koesterich said.

There are other risks that could derail a market rally even if the new few

States outlaw digital taping in cinemas

By ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS
AP WRITER

At a recent showing of "Big Fish," several moviegoers at a local theater held up camera-equipped cell phones and took snapshots of the screen. Doing the same with a video camera will soon be a crime.

Along with other several states including California, Ohio has at Hollywood's urging passed a law that lets police arrest people for videotaping movies in theaters.

The new statutes augment a film industry anti-piracy arsenal that includes bag searches for people entering movie houses—a multifaceted response to technological strides that make digital video distribution a snap.

Some analysts say that with such tactics Hollywood is shooting a political blunderbuss that could backfire. The movie industry, they say, should be more concerned about the illegally copying of films by its own.

A recent AT&T Labs study found that three of every four movies leaked on the Internet came from industry insiders—a trend that motivated the Motion Picture Academy of America to temporarily stop sending "screener" tapes and DVDs to Oscar voters.

That kind of digital piracy "is much more of a threat than someone sneaking in with a video camera," said David

Joyce, media analyst with Guzman & Co. "You're going to have really poor quality—it's not going to duplicate as quickly as an actual digital file."

Ohio's bill, signed in December by Gov. Bob Taft and taking effect in March, gives movie theaters the right to detain people suspected of videotaping movies, just as a department store can hold a suspected shoplifter.

A similar law took effect Jan. 1 in California. Michigan lawmakers introduced legislation in December, and Wisconsin and Pennsylvania passed equivalent bills in 1999.

The Motion Picture Association of America says it plans to lobby at least a dozen more states this year for similar legislation. The industry estimates pirated movies cost it \$3.5 billion annually.

"It's the same way an honest consumer is hurt by shoplifting," said John Fithian, president of North American Theater Owners.

California already has felony-level laws that could be used to prosecute suspected movie pirates. Its new law creates a less serious charge that would be easier for district attorneys to use, said James Provenza, legislative counsel for the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Although the new California charge is a misdemeanor, it still carries serious consequences—up to one year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

Under Ohio law, by contrast, a

first offense would be punishable by six months in jail and up to \$1,000 fine. Michigan's bill would set penalties up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The state laws make it easier to prosecute individuals caught in theaters because the charges focus simply on the operation of a camera—avoiding the more prickly details of federal copyright law.

"Enforcement is always a last resort, but we hope this will be a deterrent," said Vans Stevenson, senior vice president for the Motion Picture Association of America.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, a San Francisco-based advocacy group, is concerned that the state laws often are written too broadly and ignore traditional "fair use" copying of small portions of a movie for personal or educational use.

"I'm in a theater watching a movie that really (stinks), I take a five-second picture clip and send it to friends and say, 'This movie (stinks),'"" said Jason Schultz, foundation staff attorney. "Have I now violated the law and committed a felony?"

Increasingly, studios are also beefing up security around movies. At the Arena Grand Theatre in downtown Columbus, security guards hired by the studios regularly check patrons' bags, especially during sneak previews of new films.

Mine deaths fall to historic low in 2003

By ROGER ALFORD
AP WRITER

The number of miners killed on the job in the United States fell to 55 in 2003, the fewest deaths since the federal government began keeping track in 1910.

Preliminary figures from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration show 29 of the deaths occurred in coal mines, up from 27 last year. There were 26 deaths in gold, stone and other types of mines, down from 40 last year.

"That is not cause for celebration," said Bill Caylor, president of the Kentucky Coal Association. "We want to see those numbers come down to zero, and I truly believe we can achieve that."

Suzy Bohnert, spokeswoman for the mine regulatory agency, cautioned that the final numbers could change based on an examination by an accident review board.

The previous record low was 67 deaths in 2002. During the 1970s, more than 100 coal miners across the nation died in mine accidents each year. The numbers have continually declined since then.

West Virginia topped the 2003 list with 10 coal miners killed on the job in 2003, up from six the previous year. Kentucky was second with eight, down from nine in 2002.

trading days are strong. Investors have been bracing for the Federal Reserve to raise short-term interest rates as early as this year now that the economic recovery appears to be back on track.

Terrorism fears continue to pressure the market - and may have contributed to Friday's declines after a half-dozen flights were canceled or delayed by U.S. authorities who cited safety concerns.

And November's presidential election adds to the uncertainty. While an election year on average posts a 7.3 percent gain, it lags the average robust advance of 16.7 percent in the pre-election year, according to the Stock Trader's Almanac. Analysts attribute that in part to the political uncertainty as investors make bets on the who the presidential challenger is and whether an incumbent will prevail.

"There's a lot of good breadth in the advance. That tends to point to a bullish underpinning in the market," said Tim Hayes, global stock strategist at Ned Davis Research in Venice, Fla. "I think the question here is how much longer the market will maintain this momentum. Whether or not it ends in January, we don't know."

The Dow Jones industrial average ended the week up 85.18, or 0.8 percent, at 10,409.85.

The S&P 500 was up 12.59, or 1.1 percent, closing at 1,108.48. The Nasdaq composite index gained 33.54, or 1.7 percent for the week, closing at 2,006.68.

The Russell 2000 index, which tracks the movement of smaller-company stocks, rose 5.95, or 1 percent, closing at 560.85.

The Wilshire 5000 Total Market Index, which tracks more than 5,700 U.S.-based companies, ended the week at 10,777.86, up 118.42 from the previous week. A year ago, the index was 8,593.22.

"In any particular year, the number of fatalities will be up or down slightly, but the trends are showing a continuous improvement," Caylor said.

West Virginia was the only state that reported multiple deaths in an accident in 2003. Three employees of Central Cambria Drilling Co. were digging a new ventilation shaft at a mine on Jan. 22 when they were killed by an explosion. The mine regulatory agency concluded the explosion was caused by methane gas that had accumulated at the mine.

Other states reporting coal mine fatalities were Virginia and Illinois with three each, Wyoming with two, and Alabama, Indiana and Pennsylvania with one each.

Most of those were the result of rock falls, electrocution or equipment accidents.

The non-coal mine fatalities were scattered across the nation. Alabama, California, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina and Texas each had two fatalities. Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington had one fatality each.

Industry representatives cited training programs as the key factor in reducing fatalities.

Nation

Bush to propose benefit protection for immigrant

By **MIKE ALLEN**
THE WASHINGTON POST

CRAWFORD, Texas—President Bush will propose protections for the Social Security taxes paid by the workers who would come into the country under massive changes to immigration laws he plans to announce on Wednesday, Republican officials said Saturday.

Bush's plan would make it possible for such workers from Mexico and perhaps other countries to collect retirement benefits without being penalized by their home countries for the years they spent working in the United States, the officials said.

Officials began releasing details of Bush's plan shortly before Christmas and provided new details over the weekend. The officials said Bush's plan will contain a new system to help workers who want to enter from Mexico or other countries if they have jobs waiting for them. It also includes a mechanism for some undocumented residents to continue working in the United States and get on a path to legal status.

Undocumented workers now pay billions of dollars annually into Social Security but do not collect benefits

because they give their employers fraudulent Social Security numbers.

Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, an immigrant advocacy group, said he fears the Social Security plan could be used as an incentive for workers to go home instead of settling in the United States, which could create what he called "a permanent class of

temporary workers with no political power."

"The knock that will be put on Republicans is that they want immigrants as workers but not as voters," Sharry said.

Bush is scheduled to announce the package five days before he meets in Mexico with President Vicente Fox, who has been prodding the White House since Bush was inaugurated to change an

immigration system that has resulted in at least 8 million undocumented immigrants—about half of whom are Mexican—living in the United States.

Bush's plans, many of which are similar to ideas endorsed by the Democratic presidential candidates in their platforms and debates, would be the most broad changes to immigration law since a bill signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986.



INTERSTATE AVALANCHE

Colorado Department of Transportation employees Lee Metzger, left, and Steve Schaefer look on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004, as a rotary snowplow clears snow after a mid-morning avalanche covered the westbound lanes of Interstate 70 near Vail, Colo.

Security-delayed British flight arrives

WASHINGTON (AP)—Authorities were concerned with terrorism threats in the air and on the ground Saturday. The British government delayed a London-to-Washington flight for three hours and U.S. officials monitored heavily secured stadiums hosting the first round of football playoffs.

British Airways 223, the most scrutinized flight since the United States declared a high terrorism alert Dec. 21, lifted off from Heathrow Airport just after 1 p.m. EST after intensive

security checks and landed safely near Washington about 8 hours later.

It took nearly an hour for all the passengers to get off the plane and make it to the terminal area at Dulles International Airport in suburban Virginia.

"There was a lot of security but we felt it was necessary due to the sensitivity of what was going on here," passenger Joel Ginsburg told WTTG-TV in Washington. He said there was nervousness among passengers, "but the BA people were very

good and reassured us the security was tight as a drum and we were going to go for it."

"It was somber," he said of the preflight mood in London. "It was like you could hear a pin drop in the gate area."

But he said applause broke out after the big jet landed.

"It was a little bit scary there (in London)," passenger Jim McCutchan told WRC-TV. "There were about four or five guards at the gate, it looked like carrying AK-47s. It looked like they really meant it. It was a

real serious situation."

The plane had the all-clear earlier from Britain's Transport Department. The subsequent checks added to the misery of passengers on a flight also detained in Washington on Wednesday and canceled Thursday and Friday.

The British government has declined to provide details of its security concerns about the flight. The department said it took action Saturday following discussions "with a variety of sources," including U.S. authorities.

US to begin new approach on foreign aid

A revolution in U.S. foreign aid, rewarding countries for how they govern, is finally ready to get under way, almost two years after first promised by the Bush administration.

The program will favor countries whose governments are judged to be just rulers, welcoming hosts for foreign investment and promoters of projects to meet their people's

basic health and education needs.

Corrupt police states need not apply.

Administration officials expect this year to inaugurate President Bush's plan, known as the Millennium Challenge Account, which he outlined in March 2002.

It contemplated \$5 billion annually for the program starting in 2006, a 50 percent increase over the base foreign

aid budget of \$10 billion.

The administration had hoped for \$1.3 billion for the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, as a starter; Congress has provided nothing so far but is expected to approve \$1 billion after it reconvenes this month.

Bush's initiative came six months after the Sept. 11 attacks and clearly has a national security component.

"Poverty, weak institutions and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders," according to Bush's National Security Strategy report from September 2002.

Andrew Natsios, administrator of the Agency for International Development, calls it "a revolutionary new development initiative."

New York's bank robbery rate up

By TOM HAYS
AP WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—The city's 400th bank robbery of 2003 required no safecracking. No hostage-taking. Not even a drawn gun.

The robber simply walked into an HSBC branch in Manhattan on Tuesday, produced a threatening note demanding money and left with an undisclosed amount of cash.

The unremarkable formula has been the hallmark of a remarkable rise in city bank robberies in 2003: 408 were reported by New Year's Eve, up 64 percent from 249 in 2002.

The numbers, which include five heists in just over an hour this past week, defied a dip in the city's overall robbery rate and outpaced increases nationwide, exasperating police and bank officials.

"I honestly can't tell you why it's happening. ... It's just a rash," said Ed Hausdorf, director of security for North Fork Bank, hit by more than three dozen robberies in 2003.

The vast majority of stickups-by-note involved robbers working solo. Some were drug addicts desperate for easy cash, who used no more than a baseball cap and sunglasses as disguise.

Their ranks even included women and children. In August, a 12-year-old boy handed a teller a note that read "I have a gun. Give me \$30,000," and then made off with cash. Police arrested the boy's mother and the teller, alleging it was an inside job.

The banking industry long ago abandoned armed guards to avoid the risk of gunplay that could threaten customers. Tellers tend to hand over a few thousand dollars rather than risk calling a bandit's bluff.

Search on for avalanche victim in Calif.

TRUCKEE, Calif. (AP)—Rescuers searched a remote area of the Sierra Nevada on Saturday for a cross-country skier trapped in an avalanche. In separate searches, two groups of skiers and snowboarders were found after spending a frigid night in the mountains.

The missing skier was trapped Thursday in an avalanche in a rugged area west of Truckee and north of Donner Summit, a California Division of Forestry spokeswoman said. A companion escaped without injury, but could not call authorities until Saturday afternoon because a blizzard and heavy snow prevented him from getting out of the backcountry, forestry officials said.

The search was suspended Saturday evening and was expected to resume Sunday morning. No details about the skiers or the avalanche were immediately available.

The two rescued groups became lost in a blizzard Friday afternoon at separate ski resorts just north of Lake Tahoe, Placer County Sheriff Edward Bonner said. The overnight low at the nearby Truckee airport was 8 degrees below zero.

Two skiers were found uninjured but very cold about 12:30 a.m. Saturday, Bonner said.



A person passes a note to a teller demanding money at a branch of the Valley National Bank in Midtown Manhattan in this image taken from a video surveillance camera Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2003.

Under pressure from police, some banks have bolstered security, installing bulletproof glass "bandit barriers" and surveillance cameras.

"I think the banking industry has to do more," Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said this past week.

Kelly backs a pending City Council bill to require bandit barriers. Police also advocate wider use of exploding cash packs that coat robbers with a bright dye.

But the New York Bankers

Association opposes mandatory bandit barriers, saying they don't deter robbers. It instead favors "vigilant surveillance," silent alarms and tougher sentences.

As the robberies have increased, so have arrests—137 through Dec. 28, compared to 64 over the same period last year.

But in May—on the very afternoon Kelly passed out awards to four banks lauding their security records—three Manhattan branches belonging to other

banks were robbed in less than an hour.

Even the suburbs have not been spared in the outbreak of bank heists.

In Westchester County, a riding coach was accused of hitting six banks in just two days with notes that made unverified claims she was a victim of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"You listen good," one of her notes allegedly read. "I went through the Sept. 11 attack and I'm very angry today. Don't make a sound or everyone is going to die."

AP: Dean was warned on lax Vt. security

Presidential hopeful Howard Dean, who accuses President Bush of being weak on homeland security, was warned repeatedly as Vermont governor about security lapses at his state's nuclear power plant and was told the state was ill-prepared for a disaster at its most attractive terrorist target.

The warnings, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press, began in 1991 when a group of students were brought into a secure area of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant without proper screening. On at least two occasions, a gun or mock terrorists passed undetected into the plant during security tests.



Dean

During Dean's final year in office in 2002, an audit concluded that despite a decade of repeated warnings of poor safety at Vermont Yankee, Dean's administration was poorly prepared for a nuclear disaster.

"The lack of funding and overarching coordination at the state level directly impacts the ability of the state, local and power plant planners to be adequately prepared for a real emergency at Vermont Yankee," state Auditor Elizabeth M. Ready wrote in a study issued five months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Security was so lax at Vermont Yankee that in August 2001, the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission staged a drill in which three mock terrorists gained access to the plant. The agency gave Vermont Yankee the worst security rating among the nation's 103 reactors.

The NRC has primary responsibility for safety at Vermont Yankee. But Vermont laws required an active state role by creating a panel to review security and performance and requiring plant operators to set aside money for the state to use in the event of a nuclear disaster.

Dean's campaign said Saturday it ultimately was the NRC's responsibility to ensure security at the plant, but that he badgered Vermont Yankee's operators and the NRC to make improvements during the 1990s. It noted the NRC's safety budget was cut in the 1990s. (AP)

Lionel Tate said to sign plea deal Sunday

MIAMI (AP)—A teenager whose life sentence for murdering a 6-year-old playmate was thrown out will sign paperwork accepting a plea deal on Sunday, further clearing the way for his release from prison, his mother's lawyer said Saturday.

Lionel Tate spoke with his mother, Kathleen Grossett-Tate, in a conference call Saturday, said Henry Hunter, Grossett-Tate's lawyer.

Hunter said Tate, who turns 17 this month, will sign papers agreeing to plead guilty to second-degree murder

and receive a sentence of three years in prison - most of which he has already served. He also will serve one year of house arrest and 10 years probation.

The agreement would need to be ratified by a judge, a hearing Hunter said he hoped would take place within a week.

Tate's attorney did not immediately return calls seeking comment Saturday.

Tate was 12 when he punched,

kicked and stomped to death 6-year-old Tiffany Eunick. His lawyers had argued that he was imitating the pro wrestling moves he saw on television and did not mean to kill her.



Tate

He was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole. A state appeals court threw out the conviction and sentence last month, saying Tate's mental competency should have been tested before trial.

Bank robber admits threat to Sen. Clinton

CAMDEN, N.J. (AP)—A convicted bank robber who told a prison psychologist he wanted to "spice up" his life by shooting a famous person has admitted threatening to kill U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, officials said.

Edward Falvey, 51, pleaded guilty in the last week to a charge of threatening to kill an immediate family member of a former president, a federal crime that carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. No sentencing date has been set, according to Greg Reinert, a spokesman with the U.S. Attorney's office.

In 1977, Falvey was arrested and charged with threatening to kill then-President Carter. Falvey was convicted and received probation.

According to the Secret Service, Falvey wrote an April 2003 letter to a prison psychologist in which he said he wanted to "shoot a very famous person. ... My life is dull and boring. I need to spice it up."

He included a hit list, naming Clinton, as well as former President Clinton and federal judges, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Carle.

After Secret Service agents visited Falvey in prison, officials said he again wrote to the psychologist: "This is all starting to get exciting. ... I feel like a movie star."

Falvey, serving a 30-month sentence at a federal prison in Fairton, had been scheduled for release in June.

A telephone message left Saturday at his lawyer's office was not immediately returned.

Falvey's arrest was not publicized, and court papers identify Clinton only as "H.R.C."

Colorado snowstorm blamed for plane crash

DENVER (AP)—A winter storm that brought up to three feet of snow to parts of Colorado's high country Saturday was blamed for a fatal plane crash and an avalanche that temporarily shut down Vail Pass.

A twin-engine plane trying to land in heavy snow crashed less than a quarter-mile from the runway at Cortez-Montezuma County Airport in southwestern Colorado, said Lt. William Conner of the Montezuma County Sheriff's Office. The pilot, the only person on board, was killed.

Two witnesses told the Cortez Journal the plane appeared to have snow on its wings when it rocked back and forth, rolled and then nose dived to the ground.

Westbound lanes of Interstate 70 on Vail Pass were closed for about three hours after an avalanche left about six feet of snow on the road. No one was caught in the slide.

Traffic was rerouted while crews plowed the road and worked to eliminate the threat of more avalanches, officials said.

"I'm ecstatic to see this much snow," Craig Grimes of Atlanta said as he waited in his car for the road to reopen. He and his wife had arrived in Denver in the morning and were on their way to ski at Aspen.

Asia

North Korea invites US security team

By MARK MATTHEWS
THE BALTIMORE SUN

WASHINGTON—North Korea has invited American security experts and a nuclear-weapons scientist for a visit next week that analysts said could provide the first close-up indication of whether the North is actively producing fuel for nuclear weapons.

The privately arranged trip includes a retired U.S. diplomat who has negotiated with the North Koreans, the former head of the Los Alamos National Laboratory and a Stanford University specialist in Asian security.

The trip comes amid halting diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the North Korean nuclear threat in exchange for security

assurances from the United States and economic inducements from the United States, South Korea and Japan.

The Bush administration distanced itself from the delegation and played down the trip’s significance, saying it would not be a substitute for six-nation talks being arranged by China. But it did not try to block the mission.

“It should be clearly understood that groups or individuals acting outside the six-party talks would not be acting on behalf of, or with the approval of, the administration,” said White House spokeswoman Claire Buchan.

The planned visit was first disclosed by USA Today, which reported that the delegation had

been invited to North Korea’s main nuclear facility at Yongbyon. No outsiders have been allowed into the facility since North Korea expelled United Nations inspectors in late 2002.

One U.S. official said the North Koreans might back off from letting the delegation into Yongbyon now that the trip has gained worldwide attention.

But if the visit is allowed to proceed, it could shed additional light on the extent of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, which remains difficult for U.S.

intelligence agencies to gauge.

“Who knows how much they’ll be able to see,” said Wendy Sherman, who negotiated with Pyongyang as a top State Department official in the Clinton administration, noting that the North Koreans “don’t tend to play all their cards” at one time.

“I will be surprised if they use this particular trip to show they have a bomb,” Sherman said. But the visitors could be shown enough to assess Pyongyang’s claims that it has been reprocessing spent fuel rods

into nuclear-weapons fuel, Sherman said. In addition, the North Koreans could try to assure the group that nuclear-plant procedures are safe, she said.

Robert L. Gallucci, who negotiated a 1994 agreement that was intended to freeze North Korea’s nuclear program, said the visit to Yongbyon could prove to be merely “cosmetic” unless the delegation’s nuclear-weapons expert, Siegfried Hecker, were allowed inside the spent-fuel storage area to learn how much had been removed for

reprocessing. Hecker, former director of Los Alamos, is now a senior fellow at the laboratory.

The visit was arranged by John W. Lewis, a retired Stanford University professor who is still affiliated with the university’s Center for International Security and Cooperation, which he co-founded.

A third member of the group is Charles L. Pritchard of the Brookings Institution, who until last August was one of the State Department’s key contacts with North Korea.

Vajpayee stays mum on bilateral talk plans

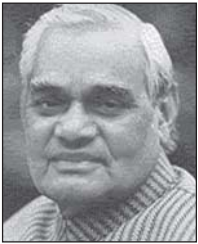
ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee received a warm welcome on his arrival in Pakistan Saturday for a regional summit seen as the best chance in years to get two old enemies talking again.

But Vajpayee kept his hosts guessing whether he would agree to bilateral discussions with either Pakistani Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali or President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the conference that begins Sunday.

Jamali clasped Vajpayee’s hand tightly as both leaders smiled broadly for the cameras after the Indian prime minister, who at 78 suffers a leg ailment, walked haltingly from an Indian Air Force passenger jet and past an Pakistani honor guard.

Pakistani officials say Jamali and Musharraf both want to talk with Vajpayee about bilateral issues outside the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, or SAARC, here. But Vajpayees’ aides remained uncommitted on the eve of the summit.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khursheed Mahmood Kasuri



Vajpayee

said that he did not know of any agreement by Vajpayee to hold talks with Musharraf or Jamali during the conference. The agenda focuses on free trade and counterterrorism.

“It takes two to tango,” Khursheed told reporters Saturday evening. “If you need peace in south Asia, you need a peace partner. Pakistan is ready, but we need a partner and that partner can only appear on the scene when we start talking and have a dialogue.”

Before leaving New Delhi, Vajpayee told an Indian television interviewer that he would not have any bilateral talks with Pakistani leaders.

“We want to give our undivided attention and energy to the success of SAARC,” Vajpayee said. “Its success will help the resolution of other problems.”

Vajpayee told an Indian magazine that he would “interact” with his hosts, but he ruled out any “meaningful discussions.”

The Indian prime minister is expected to meet either Musharraf and Jamali, or both, at an informal gathering of the leaders of the SAARC countries, with include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Strong quake felt off New Caledonia

HONG KONG (AP)—A powerful earthquake struck off the east coast of the French island of New Caledonia on Sunday, the latest in a string of temblors to hit the area, the Hong Kong Observatory said.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

The 7.1-magnitude quake was centered 211 miles east of Noumea, the island’s capital. It

struck at 12:34 a.m. Hong Kong time, said a statement from the observatory, which monitors seismic activity in the region.

New Caledonia lies in the Pacific Ocean 1,240 miles northeast of Sydney, Australia.

Three other quakes of similar magnitude hit the same area of ocean last month without causing damage or injuries.

nmhc

Indonesian cameraman held by rebels

LELY T. DJUHARI
AP WRITER

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian cameraman being held captive by separatist rebels in Indonesia's Aceh province said he fears he may be shot and killed just like a colleague who also was taken hostage.

Ferry Santoro, a Jakarta-based cameraman for the privately owned RCTI TV network, was abducted with reporter Ersu Siregar and their driver in June after Jakarta declared martial law and launched a major offensive against the rebels.

Siregar was shot dead last week by Indonesian troops engaged in a firefight with the rebels in a swamp in east Aceh. The military claimed rebels used Siregar as a human shield during the gunfight.

The rebels, however, denied the charges and accused the soldiers of "executing" Siregar.

Santoro fled into the jungle with his captors.

"I had to think about saving myself," Santoro told The Associated Press late Saturday. "I had to retreat because the bullets kept flying, preventing me from getting nearer."

Santoro was speaking on a satellite phone the rebels allowed him to use. It was unclear whether he was speaking under pressure from his captors.

The 34-year-old Santoro said he was "sad and depressed after the deadly shooting" of his colleague, adding: "I could be the one shot by soldiers the next time."

"We are holding on to the hope that people will not forget us," he said.

Santoro is one of about 100 hostages being held by rebels in Aceh province, who have been on the run since Jakarta launched a major military offensive May 19 after a six-month truce broke down.

Siregar's death drew protests from local and international media groups, which accused the military of not doing enough to negotiate his release.

The insurgents are demanding a temporary cease-fire by the military and the involvement of international mediators before releasing the hostages.

However, the military has rejected the offer.

"Our job is to hunt and destroy rebels, that's all," said a spokesman, Lt. Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki.

Santoro said he had only been allowed to speak to his family twice

since his capture, and had to move at a moment's notice through the jungle to avoid military patrols.

"It's tough," he said. "We sleep wherever we are told - in a hut, in a tent or beneath the stars."

Rebel leader Ishak Daud said they are good to the hostages, whom they have accused of being military spies.

"We treat all our detainees well, including the reporters. They get the same food as any of the rebels in the jungles," he said. "If they are innocent, we try to set them free. But the military makes it difficult for us."



Male delegate Moammad Gul Younusi talks to female counterparts to Loya Jirga, or grand council, about women's rights in Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004.

Afghan constitutional council breaks down

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—After a three-week rollercoaster ride marked by shouting matches, backdoor bargaining and boycotts, Afghanistan's constitutional council broke down again Saturday—this time over a single word.

Leaders called the last-minute hitch shameful, and vowed that Sunday will be the final day for talks on the constitution, which is supposed to help the nation reconcile and rebuild after years of civil war.

The missing word, delegates said, was "official"—the status that speakers of Uzbek and Turkic languages want for their native tongues. The dispute has highlighted Afghanistan's enduring ethnic divisions.

"Everything is resolved except a difference about one word. Some of the delegates want it and some don't," council chairman Sibghatullah Mujaddedi said. "It is shameful we couldn't bring complete agreement on this word."

"If we cannot finalize it tomorrow, we will announce to the world that we failed," he told dismayed delegates seated in a tent on a Kabul college campus.

The ethnic split, led by influential regional leaders, bodes ill for efforts to disarm the unruly militias who control much of the country since helping the United States oust the Taliban two years ago.

The friction pits smaller groups against the Pashtuns, from whom the

Taliban drew their strength. It has poisoned the political atmosphere ahead of key national elections slated for the summer.

Foreign officials have warned that Taliban insurgents want to disrupt the convention, and on Saturday night police reported an explosion—possibly a rocket—not far from the meeting site. No damage or injuries were reported.

With U.S.-backed President Hamid Karzai vowing to run only if the constitution installs a dominant chief executive, American and U.N. diplomats have been scrambling to salvage a deal.

Journalists were hustled out of the tent after Mujaddedi adjourned the meeting to allow more private negotiations.

48 S. Korean officials tied to IBM charged

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Prosecutors investigating corruption in the bidding on government contracts by a South Korean affiliate of IBM Corp. indicted 48 government and company officials Sunday, a local news agency reported.

IBM Korea and its local affiliates won \$55 million in procurement contracts from government bodies through bribery and prearranged bidding, prosecutors said, according to Yonhap news agency.

Prosecution officials were not immediately available for comment. IBM Korea expressed regret over the incident, saying the "company has never approved or overlooked the creation of slush funds."

On Sunday, prosecutors indicted Jang Kyong-ho, IBM's executive director in charge of business with government organizations, and a South Korean tax official, Han Doo-hyun.

China closes 2,000 fireworks factories

BEIJING (AP)—Authorities in a northern Chinese province ordered more than 2,000 fireworks factories closed after a series of fatal explosions "sounded warning bells for the industry," the government said Saturday.

The factories in Fengxiang County in the northern province of Shaanxi were mostly home workshops, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Jang was accused of helping Winsol, a local distributor of IBM servers, win about \$35.8 million worth of procurement contracts from the National Tax Service and four other public offices through prearranged bidding between 2001 to 2003.

Jang also was suspected of helping Winsol earn more contracts from the Ministry of Information and Technology by prearranging bidding with companies such as LG Electronics and SK C&C, a subsidiary of South Korea's No. 3 conglomerate, SK. He bribed the companies in return for them giving up the bids, they said.

Jang and 11 others were indicted on bribery charges and for violating fair trade laws. Prosecutors indicted 36 others for similar charges but did not arrest them.

Investigators have searched IBM Korea's three offices in Seoul.

The move came three days after the central government created teams to inspect fireworks factories and other work sites across the country after explosions at two fireworks factories in China that killed 46 people.

"The latest two deadly fireworks accidents sounded warning bells for the industry," Xinhua said. Chinese use large numbers of fireworks to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

New national identity emerges in Taiwan as separate from China

By PHILIP P. PAN
THE WASHINGTON POST

TAIPEI, Taiwan—Like almost all adults in Taiwan, Li Chuan-hsin grew up convinced that he was Chinese, that Taiwan was part of China and that his government was destined to take back the mainland from the Communists. These lessons were drilled into him in school and as a young soldier in Taiwan's army.

But as a social studies teacher in Xinpu National Elementary School here, Li is passing on different beliefs to his students. Ask his sixth-graders if any of them are Chinese, and they giggle and trade puzzled looks. Ask which are Taiwanese, and they all shoot their arms into the air and shout, "Me!"

Textbooks that once covered only

Chinese history and geography have been rewritten to focus more on Taiwan, and local dialects once banned in school are now the subject of weekly classes. Maps of Taiwan have replaced those of China, and portraits of Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist Party leader who moved his government here after the 1949 Communist revolution, have disappeared. The school even took down a sign telling students to behave like "dignified and upstanding Chinese."

The changes in Li's classroom and others across Taiwan reflect a profound shift in public opinion on this island of 23 million, one that poses a challenge for both China and the United States. After more than half a century of self-rule and democratic evolution, most people here have abandoned Chiang's dream of unification with China and see themselves as citizens of a new,

independent nation with its own culture and history.

"We don't teach that Taiwan is part of China anymore," said Li, 48, who campaigned for the curriculum reforms. "We emphasize that we're Taiwanese now, and everybody accepts that."

This rise in Taiwanese nationalism could frustrate China's hopes of bringing Taiwan back into the fold by binding it to the mainland's booming economy, while strengthening the position of those in Beijing who want the military to seize the island. It's also a problem for the administration of President Bush, which has promised to defend Taiwan but worries about getting dragged into a war provoked by Taiwanese actions.

Despite threats from Beijing and a direct rebuke by Bush, President Chen Shui-bian has refused to cancel a

referendum in March, in which citizens will be asked whether Taiwan should publicly demand that China remove missiles aimed at the island.

Officials in Beijing, Washington and Taipei all say they support the status quo. But Taipei defines the status quo differently than the others. While China and the United States have warned Taiwan not to declare independence, Taiwanese generally believe the island is already independent, and thus free to hold referendums, write a new constitution and take other actions that China opposes.

The span of a generation has brought a fundamental change in how people in Taiwan view themselves. Though almost everyone here is ethnic Chinese and speaks Chinese, and the island is only 100 miles from China's southeastern coastline, polls show that a majority or

near-majority of residents refuse to identify themselves as Chinese, preferring the term Taiwanese.

An October survey by the United Daily News, for instance, found that 62 percent of respondents said they were Taiwanese, the highest level recorded by the newspaper since it began asking the question in 1989, when only 16 percent said they were Taiwanese. Those identifying themselves as Chinese dropped to 19 percent from a high of 52 percent in 1989.

Several factors are driving this transformation. China's military threats have alienated many residents. Islanders with the strongest ties to China—those born on the mainland—are aging and dying off. And democratic reforms have given people the freedom to question Chiang's version of Taiwanese history.

World

Egyptian charter jet crashes, 148 killed

By SALAH NASRAWI
AP WRITER

SHARM EL-SHEIK, Egypt (AP)—A charter jet full of French tourists returning home from Egyptian vacations crashed into the shark-infested Red Sea early Saturday, killing all 148 people aboard. Officials blamed mechanical failure.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher said the crash, which came as nations heightened security at airports and canceled flights because of terror threats, was “not related to any terrorist act.”

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the crash was an accident apparently caused by a mechanical problem.

French officials also said the crash appeared accidental. Deputy Transportation Minister Dominique Bussereau told reporters at Charles de Gaulle airport outside Paris that the pilot detected problems on takeoff and tried vainly to turn back.

Flash Airlines Flight FSH604 took off from the popular tourist resort of Sharm el-Sheik bound for Paris after a stopover in Cairo. The weather was clear at the time.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said there were 133 French tourists on the flight. One Japanese, one Moroccan, and 13 Egyptian crew members also were on the flight, Egypt’s Civil Aviation Minister Ahmed Shafeeq said.

Distraught relatives of those

aboard Flight FSH604 gathered at airports and travel offices in France and Egypt, desperate for news of their loved ones.

French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin declared the nation in mourning and said investigators will go to Egypt to “shed light as quickly as possible on this catastrophe.”

Engineers from the national carrier EgyptAir rushed in to help with the investigation and the United States also was sending an accident investigator, said Keith Holloway, a National Transportation Safety Board spokesman in Washington. He said Egypt requested the help.

At the Flash Airlines office in Cairo, a man who came to check on his daughter, a 30-year-old flight attendant on the plane, walked out in despair 15 minutes later, supported by relatives.

“Samia! Samia!” he wailed. Next to him, his wife screamed, “My daughter! My daughter!”

Family members hoping to pick up passengers at the French airport early Saturday were discreetly pulled aside by authorities and taken by shuttle bus to a nearby hotel.

Looking pale and shaken, a couple in their 50s arrived at the terminal, where the man asked an airport official: “My children are at Sharm. How do I find out if they were on the plane?”

Most of the passengers were on a tour organized by FRAM, one of France’s largest travel operators. FRAM said it had 125 people—mostly families or



Rescue personnel remove debris from the sea off the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheikh after a charter airliner carrying 148 people, mostly French tourists, crashed into the Red Sea shortly after take off Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004. AP

groups of friends - on the flight and some were children.

Speaking to reporters at the airport in Sharm el-Sheik, Shafeeq said the plane checked out fine before takeoff.

“The first indications suggest a technical fault,” he said, saying the last communication with the plane was at 5,300 feet.

According to the radar images, the plane turned left as normal after takeoff, then suddenly straightened out and turned right before plunging into the sea, one minute after its left turn, Shafeeq said.

Earlier, he told state-run

television: “There was a malfunction that made it difficult for the crew to ... save the plane.”

Shafeeq said the depth of the water—at least 1,000 feet—complicated retrieval efforts but some bodies, as well as airplane wreckage, were found. A marine

official in a nearby port said at least 50 body parts were found.

Tourists in swimsuits watched from the beach as rescuers circled the waters in small boats looking for survivors. They found only bodies, body parts and debris,

including suitcases, shoes, life preservers and small bits of plane wreckage.

Egypt’s Middle East News Agency reported that blood was seen in the water because sharks ate some victims.

Flash Airlines said in a statement that the wreckage was found about nine miles from the airport, according to the Egyptian news agency MENA.

Several people—tourists and workers at a nearby Sheraton resort hotel—said they were awakened by a loud sound or explosion when the jet crashed shortly before 5 a.m. local time.

“It’s scary,” French tourist Sandrine Prost said. “I would never imagine that this could happen.”

Flash Airlines, which has been in business for six years, said the Boeing 737 was one of two it owned.

The jet flew in early Saturday from Venice, Italy, dropping off passengers in Sharm el-Sheik, the airline said. New passengers then boarded for the flight to Paris via Cairo. The airplane underwent maintenance checks in Norway and the most recent showed no problems, officials said.

97-year-old woman rescued unhurt from ruins in Bam; death toll rises to 35,000

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON
AP WRITER

BAM, Iran (AP)—For nearly nine days after an earthquake demolished her city, 97-year-old Sharbanou Mazandarani lay trapped under furniture and crumbled masonry, passing fear-filled days and cold nights.

Mazandarani was not ready to give up. And on Saturday, dogs trained to detect humans in rubble located her and rescuers dug for three hours to pull her out of the rubble unhurt.

“God kept me alive,” the petite, wrinkled Mazandarani said as she lay on a bed in a makeshift hospital in Bam, covered to her chin with a blue blanket and a brown print scarf tied around her head.

Rescuers said she asked for a cup of tea soon after her rescue—and then complained it was too hot to drink.

Normally people can survive up to three days in the rubble of an earthquake. It was unclear

whether Mazandarani had food or water while she lay trapped under the ruins.

“No one expected her to be alive. It’s a miracle,” provincial government spokesman Asadollah Iranmanesh said.

Her rescue was not the only bright spot in the aftermath of the Dec. 26 quake. On Saturday, U.S. doctors said they had delivered four babies at a makeshift hospital.

Meanwhile, the death toll rose to about 35,000, Brig. Gen. Hoseyn Fat’ahi of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps told Iran’s official news agency. He said the injured numbered 17,000.

Figures for the overall dead have varied according to differing estimates of the number of bodies still under the rubble and thousands of unregistered burials.

A situation report by the U.N. Disaster Assessment Coordination Team warned that many survivors were suffering from psychological

disorders after the deaths of their loved ones and the destruction of their homes.

“Post-traumatic stress disorder is highly prevalent,” the U.N. report said.

On Friday, the U.S. field hospital operated on a young Iranian soldier who tried to commit suicide by shooting himself after discovering the quake had wiped out his family.

French and German aid groups were flying in a total of 130 psychologists and psychiatrists to counsel survivors, the U.N. report said. The Iranian Red Crescent Society has already deployed 40 women counselors to Bam.

The 6.6-magnitude quake damaged beyond repair up to 85 percent of Bam’s houses and buildings, the report said. Camps of tents with heating are being erected around the city, U.N. officials said. Up to now, the homeless have been living in unheated tents set up amid the ruins.

wanted for
employment

3 US soldiers killed in Iraq attacks

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG
AP WRITER

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—Insurgents hit a U.S. base in central Iraq with mortar shells, killing one American soldier and wounding two others, the military said Saturday. In a separate attack, rebels set off a bomb and opened fire on a U.S. convoy in Baghdad, killing two soldiers and wounding three.

The mortar shells struck a base of the Army's 4th Infantry Division on Friday night in Balad, north of Baghdad, Sgt. Robert Cargie said.

One shell exploded near a trailer used as a bedroom by some troops, and a soldier standing in its doorway was killed, he said. Two other soldiers were struck by shrapnel and taken to a combat support hospital, where they were in

stable condition, Cargie said.

The U.S. military searched for the assailants by helicopter and set up checkpoints in the area. Six people were detained for questioning, a military spokesman said.

In a separate attack Friday in Baghdad, a bomb exploded in the al-Rashid district and insurgents opened fire on a U.S. convoy, killing two U.S. soldiers and wounding three others, the military said.

The names of the slain soldiers were withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Northwest of Baghdad, hundreds of residents protested Saturday in Hadithah, saying U.S. soldiers had raided the town overnight. A cameraman for Associated Press Television News filmed four shroud-covered bodies and one person in a

hospital who was injured by a gunshot.

Residents said the four died in the U.S. raid, but there was no way to immediately verify the claim. The military had no immediate comment.

The soldiers were in armored vehicles and "targeted three houses—my sister's house, my uncle's and my own," said Abdel Meguid Awad, a resident.

Hadithah is part of the so-called "Sunni Triangle," the former heartland of Saddam Hussein's support and a center of opposition to the U.S.-led occupation. The American search for fugitives and insurgents is focused on the region.

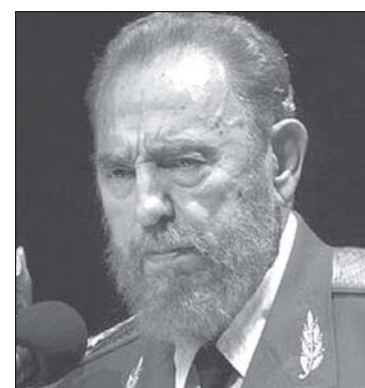
Also Friday, the U.S. military shelled the sparsely populated southern edge of Baghdad to root out insurgents believed to be launching mortar shells and rockets.

A military spokesman said the shelling of the Doura neighborhood was part of an offensive dubbed Operation Iron Grip. Residents said it appeared U.S. fire was targeting fields in the neighborhood.

Bordered by date palm farms, Doura was once home to a number of former officials in Saddam's government and is now the site of a U.S. military base.

The military is conducting operations like Iron Grip "in response to mortar rounds being fired" from specific locations around the city, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt told reporters.

The operations send "a very clear message to anybody who thinks that they can run around Baghdad without worrying about the consequences of firing (rocket propelled grenades), firing mortars," he said.



Castro

Fidel Castro celebrates 45th anniversary

HAVANA (AP)—Declaring that together they had written "an unprecedented page of history," Fidel Castro gathered with several thousand members of Cuba's political elite Saturday to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the revolutionary triumph that brought him to power.

Wearing the olive-green dress uniform with gold- and red-trimmed epaulets reserved only for special occasions, Castro addressed the group for about 45 minutes after a concert at the Karl Marx Theater.

Government Cabinet ministers, top Communist Party leaders and members of the mass organizations—such as the Union of Young Communists—supporting the power structure were invited to the event.

Castro, standing on the theater's stage before a carved mahogany podium, told the formally dressed guests that the protagonists of the revolution sought social justice, not fame.

"Our objective never was the search for glory," he said.

Nevertheless, they and their supporters went on to write "an unprecedented page of history," he said.

Castro's speech was broadcast on state-run television and radio.

As the event began, television viewers were shown black-and-white film clips of the early days of the revolution, when Castro was a triumphant 32-year-old rebel commander leading his men into the eastern city of Santiago on Jan. 1, 1959.

Just hours before, then-President Fulgencio Batista fled the island for the Dominican Republic.

Castro, 77, is the world's longest-ruling head of government - the only socialist system in the Western Hemisphere. His leadership over this Caribbean nation of 11.2 million people remains unchallenged.

Castro has ruled during the administrations of 10 different American presidents, successfully defying their attempts to force him to change his socialist system.

While supporters consider Castro the spiritual heir of Cuban independence hero Jose Marti, his detractors criticize him for jailing opponents and stifling dissent.

Saturday's event began with the island's national anthem, followed by a modern dance rendition accompanied by Cuba's National Orchestra.

Also performing were Cuba's National Choir, a children's choir, a Spanish dance troupe and vocalist Omara Portuondo of Buena Vista Social Club fame.

4 Palestinians killed in West Bank clashes

By ALI DARAGHMEH
AP WRITER

NABLUS, West Bank (AP)—Israeli soldiers patrolling the West Bank city of Nablus shot and killed three Palestinians during fighting that spilled over into the funeral procession later in the day, when troops killed a fourth Palestinian.

Saturday's killings threatened to undermine a renewed Egyptian initiative to negotiate a cease-fire after 39 months of Mideast violence.

The cause of the violence in Nablus was disputed. The Israeli military said troops opened fire after being attacked with rocks, firebombs and a concrete block dropped from a roof. Palestinian witnesses said Israelis killed an attacker and two bystanders, including a 15-year-old boy on a rooftop watching troops pass.

Hours later, Israeli soldiers shot at Palestinians during the funeral procession for the three dead, killing one man and lightly wounding three others. The army said troops shot two armed men who walked in their direction during the gathering. Witnesses claimed the shooting was unprovoked.

Israeli soldiers usually give a wide berth to funeral processions, where mourners with rifles often shoot into the air. Witnesses said there were no gunmen at the funeral Saturday.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat criticized the killings, saying "we hold the Israeli government fully responsible for its consequences."

Over the past two weeks, Israel has conducted a series of raids in Nablus in



an effort to weaken Palestinian militant groups operating in the area.

Late Friday, a roadside bomb blew up next to an Israeli army jeep in the West Bank city. The militant Islamic Jihad group took responsibility for the attack, which caused no casualties.

In other violence, Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian planting an explosive device near a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip late Friday, the military said.

Nablus was quiet Saturday morning when the military said a patrol was ambushed from several different directions and heavy rocks were dropped on troops from the roof. The soldiers shot an attacker on the roof, the military said.

The soldiers also shot a Palestinian who was running toward them with a pistol and another who had just lit a firebomb and was preparing to throw it, the military said. Military sources could not confirm whether they had been killed.

Palestinian witnesses said Saturday's clashes began when troops shot Amjad al Masri, 15, as he sat on his roof watching the troops pass. As news spread of his killing, Palestinians began throwing stones and other objects at soldiers, witnesses said.

Israeli police arrest an Israeli peace activist, who was among 28 arrested as they attempted to approach the West Bank village of Dir Balut for a demonstration against the Israeli separation barrier, about 10 kms from Rosh Ha'ain, Israel, near the border of the West Bank, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004.

AP

Sky marshals, locked cockpits could endanger air security—British pilots

By SUE LEEMAN
AP WRITER

LONDON (AP)—A U.S. directive requiring foreign air operators flying its skies to have armed sky marshals and restrict access to cockpits likely will endanger lives rather than improve safety, Britain's pilots union said Saturday.

In a hard-hitting statement posted on its Web site, the British Air Line Pilots' Association (BALPA) said such measures were examples of "security fads" that pilots feel were being forced on them without consultation "to reassure the public, usually from the U.S.A."

"You put guns on planes and there will be accidents," said BALPA spokesman Keith Bill. "We are simply doing this because the United States has asked for it, but we think it is nonsense."

BALPA said the United States has now ensured that all foreign operators in U.S. airspace restrict access to plane cockpits but "their own operators are undertaking a trial which allows a far less restrictive procedure."

"It is likely that (pilots) may soon be permitted access to a Federal Aviation Authority-regulated cockpit when (they) are denied access to one of (their) own employers'."

"How ludicrous that a pilot can fly

an aircraft one day and be classed as a security risk the next," it said.

BALPA has said it will go along with sky marshals and cockpit restrictions under protest but is seeking certain assurances from airlines, including legal and financial indemnity in case of shoot-outs.

It also wants undertakings that pilots will be in command at all times and will know the identity and seating of sky marshals.

A spokesman for Britain's Department of Transport said the pilots "will no doubt make their feelings known" when they meet Transport Secretary Alistair Darling on Tuesday.

He added that in the face of information that flights could be attacked, the government "has a responsibility to look at all measures that will improve security—that is why we agreed to sky marshals."

Some news reports said British pilots' opposition to sky marshals were at the root of the cancellation of British Airways' afternoon flight BA223 to Washington D.C. on Thursday and Friday, but BALPA denied this.

BALPA is calling for "a new aviation security culture" involving tougher security at airports and greater co ordination between governments and aviation bodies.

Health & Fitness

The American burger: How safe is it?

By WALTER NICHOLLS and CANDY SAGON
THE WASHINGTON POST

Of all of the food safety concerns raised by the discovery of mad cow disease at a Washington state dairy farm, perhaps none is more focused than that on ground beef and that staple of many an American diet, the hamburger.

Meat from one dairy cow infected with the disease was distributed in eight Western states and the U.S territory of Guam, and consumers in those regions who ate the meat said they did so in the form of hamburgers.

The meat from one tainted cow ends up so widespread because the ground beef we shape into patties for the fry pan, grill or broiler is likely to be meat combined from several animals, a recipe that increases the odds, still infinitesimally slight, that the meat is contaminated.

In addition, ground beef can come from many parts of the same cow, and some parts are said to be safer than others. The cow's nervous system harbors the disease, although some food safety officials have assured consumers that the American meat-processing system keeps brains and spinal cords out of the meat that is slaughtered.

For starters, concerned consumers may want to stay clear of meats with bones that come close to the spinal column such as porterhouse and T-bone steaks, standing rib roast and bone-in prime, chuck or round steaks. (And it might not be a good time to start a pot of homemade beef stock from neck bones either.)

Unlike some other food-related contamination, such as E coli (Escherichia coli), mad cow disease is not affected by cooking, so a very rare hamburger or a well-done one presents the same risk. Irradiation also has no effect on the disease, so beef that has been treated in that manner also offers no guarantee. But is there a way to keep a delicious juicy hamburger on the table? Or should consumers put this American favorite aside until all the facts are in?

Go Organic?

In October of 2002 the U.S. Department of Agriculture instituted an organic labeling system so consumers choosing organic products could know that the food had been produced without pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, irradiation or bioengineering. These standards apply to U.S.-grown food as well as imported food.

The strict certification process and ongoing inspections of organic farms could make it less likely that meat products from such farms are contaminated by mad cow disease, though all of the ways the disease spreads are not fully understood.

An animal becomes infected with mad cow by eating contaminated feed—most likely feed or supplements that include the brain and spinal cord tissue of cows or other ruminants. In the United States and Canada, such ingredients have been banned since 1997; the dairy cow in Washington state was born before that ban was in effect.

To be certified organic, cattle must be given a vegetarian diet of primarily foraged grass. Grains such as corn, barley and soy beans are fed for a short time at the feed lot to produce added fat that contributes needed flavor components. Growth hormones and antibiotics are not added to feed.

“Under USDA regulations all byproduct feeding is prohibited (on organic farms). That’s a huge difference right there,” says James A. Riddle, organic policy specialist for NewFarm.org, a project of the nonprofit Rodale Institute. The Food and Drug Administration allows conventional cattle feed and supplements to include cattle blood, gelatin, tallow and milk protein.

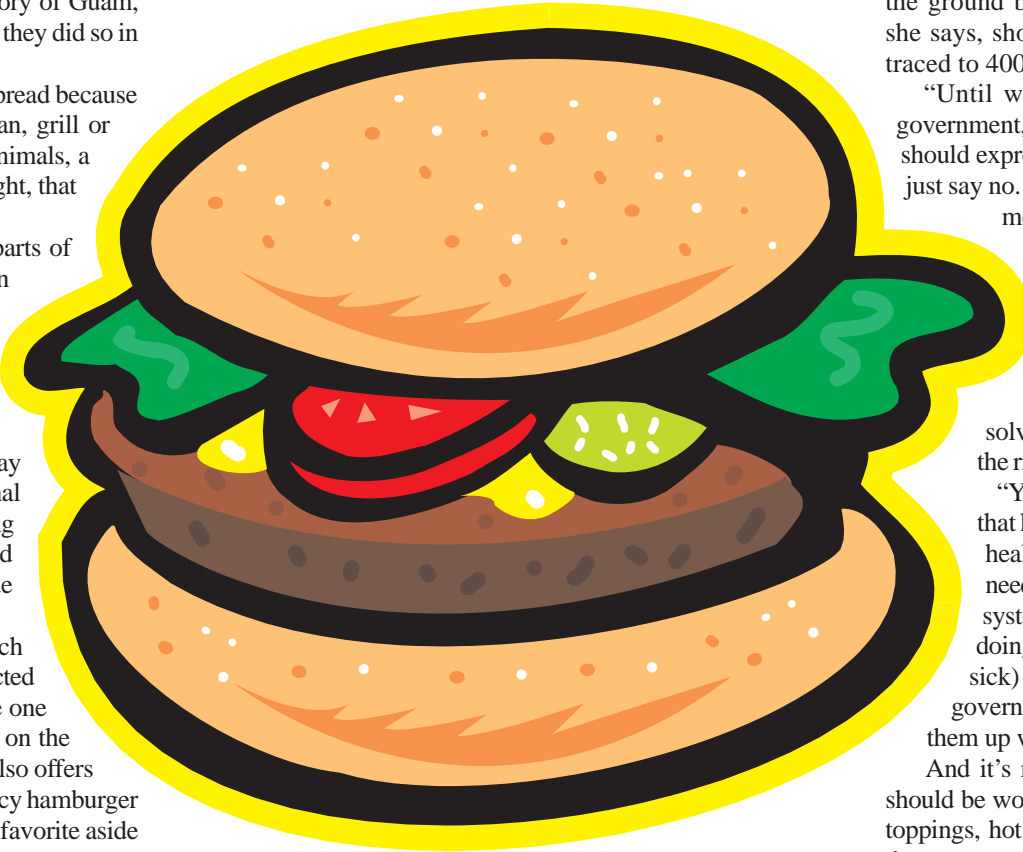
Knowing when and from where an animal came to a ranch or farm is essential in time of crisis. On organic farms, the tracking of each animal from birth or the source of purchase is mandatory. There must be records of all organic practices, health care and any treatments the animal received. Annual verified inspections are made of feed mills, farms and slaughterhouses.

Small farming operations that produce pasture-raised, grass-fed beef and all-natural beef farms that do not use growth hormones and antibiotics also follow strict guidelines for feed and animal tracking.

Organic beef comes with a hefty price. Organic ground beef sells for more than twice the price of traditional beef. At Whole Foods Market here, a 12-ounce package of Organic Valley brand frozen organic ground beef is \$5.99. Still, demand for Organic Valley products is rising.

“Awareness has peaked. We’re seeing a significant increase in demand from the e-mails and telephone traffic,” says Michael Levine, CEO of the meat department for Organic Valley, headquartered in LaFarge, Wis. “Individuals who only had a moderate interest before are calling now. They want shipments.”

In the Washington area, at Sunnyside Farms Market stores in Washington, Va., and Sperryville, Va., customers are asking more questions concerning the store’s organic beef.



“Every time there is a food disaster—genetically engineered corn or E-coli—we see a spike, we see a bump in sales,” says David Cole, chairman of Sunnyside Farms.

“It’s been said that war is the way that Americans learn about geography. Well, in the same way, food disasters are how we find out about where our food comes from.”

Abstain?

Some experts are so outraged by the government’s slowness in

dealing with mad cow concerns that they feel consumers should consider avoiding ground beef completely.

Marion Nestle, professor of public health at New York University and the author of “Safe Food,” says the unfolding situation “is so shocking, it takes my breath away. I mean, the meat’s in Guam and Hawaii. It’s already almost halfway around the world.”

An outspoken critic of the country’s food industry, Nestle says part of the problem is that consumers have no idea where the ground beef in their supermarket comes from. One study, she says, showed that a single pound of ground beef could be traced to 400 animals in six states.

“Until we have a little consumer protection going on in government, consumers have to take care of themselves. They should express their distress about the current meat situation and just say no. The message will be loud and clear in a way no other message will be.”

Caroline Smith DeWaal, director of food safety for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a Washington consumer group, won’t go quite that far, but she agrees that “ground beef (safety) is clearly a weakness.”

“What’s frustrating is that the USDA could have solved this problem. They’ve been repeatedly alerted to the risks posed to the public. The hazard is there,” she says.

“You don’t want to punish the industry for something that happened to one cow,” says Patty Lovera of the public health group Public Citizen. On the other hand, consumers need to pressure the government to improve the food safety system, she says. “There’s a lot more the USDA could be doing, like eliminating ‘downer’ animals (which appear sick) and expanding the testing for mad cow disease. The government says all these reassuring things, but doesn’t back them up with actions.”

And it’s not just ground beef in hamburgers that consumers should be worried about, adds Smith DeWaal. “Taco filling, pizza toppings, hot dogs, processed meats, these are all likely products that can expose consumers to mad cow disease.”

Still, other experts say avoiding ground meat completely is an overreaction.

“The chance of being infected is very small,” says Paul Brown, a senior investigator at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., and a longtime researcher of mad cow disease. “I would bet my life we won’t have an epidemic.”

Besides, adds Marybeth Cousin, a food microbiology professor at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., “I would be more worried about getting the flu this winter than getting mad cow disease.”

CPTA

CUC MEETING

Life & Style

NASA rover touches down on Mars

By ANDREW BRIDGES
AP SCIENCE WRITER

A NASA rover plunged through the atmosphere of Mars and bounced down upon its rocky surface Saturday night, beginning a mission to roam the Red Planet in search of evidence that it was once suitable for life.

Scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory let out whoops of joy and embraced one another as signals from the Spirit rover indicated it had survived the landing.

When the spacecraft stopped bouncing, the four-petaled lander that contains the rover was standing upright. That will make unfolding it easier, said Chris Jones, director of planetary flight programs at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"That is how we hoped it would land," Jones said.

Spirit was expected to emerge from inside the flowerlike lander within its first 90 minutes on Mars, after it retracts the air bags that cushioned its landing. Spirit also should deploy its solar arrays during that time.

It is one of two-identical six-wheeled robots expected to roam the planet for 90 days, analyzing Martian rocks and soil for clues that could reveal whether the planet was ever a warmer, wetter place capable of sustaining life.

Mission officials said the rover could start snapping pictures of Mars late Saturday night.

"We could get part of a panorama this evening. There's nothing better," said JPL's Matthew Golombek, who helped pick the rover's landing site on Mars.

The rover won't trundle off on its own for another nine days, however.

The rover relied on a heat shield, parachute and rockets to slow its descent to Mars. Eight seconds before landing, a giant set of air bags inflated to cushion its bouncy landing.

It was not immediately clear if the



Members of the media including Bob McDonald from Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto cheer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as it's announced that the Mars Rover Spirit had landed, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004, in Pasadena, Calif.

air bags sufficiently protected the rover, enclosed inside a four-petaled lander, from the jarring landing.

But up until the landing everything was proceeding flawlessly, with Spirit appearing on track to make a "bull's-eye" landing within a cigar-shaped ellipse inside Gusev Crater, a Connecticut-sized indentation just south of the Martian equator, navigation team chief Louis D'Amario said.

"This is essentially perfect navigation. We couldn't have possibly

hoped to do better than this," D'Amario said.

Previously, about two of every three attempts to land spacecraft on Mars have failed. The latest apparent failure was the British Beagle 2 lander, which has not been heard from since it was to have set down on Mars on Christmas.

"It's an incredibly difficult place to land. Some have called it the 'death planet' for good reason," said Ed Weiler, NASA's associate administrator for space science.

NASA's last attempt at landing on Mars, in 1999, failed when a software glitch sent the Polar Lander crashing to the ground. Since then, the space agency has increased oversight of its missions.

"We have done everything we know to do to ensure these missions will be a success," said Charles Elachi, director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The \$820 million NASA project also

includes a twin rover, Opportunity, which is set to arrive on Mars on Jan. 24.

The camera- and instrument-laden rovers were designed to spend 90 days analyzing Martian rocks and soil for clues that could reveal whether the Red Planet was ever a warmer, wetter place capable of sustaining life.

Today, Mars is a dry and cold world. But ancient river channels and other water-carved features spied from orbit suggest that Mars may have had a more hospitable past.

"We see these intriguing hints Mars may have been a different place long ago," said Steve Squyres, the mission's main scientist.

The rovers were built to look for evidence that liquid water—a necessary ingredient for life—once persisted on the surface of the planet. A direct search for life on Mars is at least a decade away, NASA scientists said.

Together, the twin robots were launched in the most intensive scientific assault on another planetary body since the Apollo missions to the moon, said Orlando Figueroa, director of NASA's Mars exploration program.

NASA launched the 384-pound Spirit and its twin in hopes they would become the fourth and fifth U.S. spacecraft to survive landing on Mars. Twenty other spacecraft from various nations have failed.

Scientists are taking advantage of the closest approach Mars has made to Earth in 60,000 years. NASA intends to send spacecraft to Mars at regular 26-month intervals, or each time the Earth laps the Red Planet as they both circle the sun.

The highly anticipated Spirit landing follows another important American space mission. On Friday, a NASA spacecraft flew through the bright halo of a distant comet to scoop up less than a thimbleful of dust that could shed light on how the solar system was formed.

Have thumb, will travel: The joys of hitchhiking

By EVELYN NIEVES
THE WASHINGTON POST

NILAND, Calif.—It took Matt Hansen five days to travel from Columbus, Ohio, to Albuquerque, N.M., another handful to make it to San Juan Capistrano, Calif., and one more day to journey 184 miles east and wind up here, literally the end of the earth as far as California goes.

The trip could have taken longer. Or, with better luck—a couple of friendlier drivers, or just one cross-country trucker in the mood to bend an ear—It would have been shorter. But Hansen had no regrets. Serious hitchhikers never do.

"When I hitchhike, it's to find some sort of sense of self," he said, sitting by a campfire Thursday in the scrubby brush of the desert about three miles outside of town. A group of like-minded travelers, people he had just met New Year's Eve, nodded in agreement.

Like Hansen, who is 22, the long-distance road-trippers who gathered here at the southeastern end of California for a New Year's convention for hitchhikers were young (most of them under 30) and in no hurry to spend their days in fluorescent-lighted cubicles. They've read Jack Kerouac. They consider traveling by thumb a way of life, at least for a while.

Morgan Strub, a "professional hitchhiker" who runs Digihitch (www.digihitch.com), a Web site for hitchhikers, thought up the idea of a gathering. He has held two others, in Toronto and Portland, Ore., and is trying to make them regular events.

It seems that there are more serious hitchhikers, logging their miles by the thousands, than many people realize. Like trick-or-treating, hitchhiking has developed a bad rap. But, like Halloween, the dangers of hitchhiking, Strub said, are overblown. "There are

people who hitchhike all the time," Strub, 30, said. And it is high time, he added, for a way to network and share information.

Digihitch, which encourages hitchhikers to share their road stories and lists the most popular books for hitchhikers (no surprise: Kerouac's "On the Road" is No. 1), was just the beginning of what Strub hopes will be a hitchhiker community.

"We're interested in creating a sense of community," said Strub, who is writing a book about his own adventures on the road, "and creating more resources for hitchhikers to have as they make their way."

The only problem is, hitchhikers tend to be loners, people who go their own way. While about 100 people had said they would show up at the gathering here, by Thursday, the second-to-last day of the get-together, only handfuls had arrived. Strub had no idea whether more would show, or when.

No one glossed over the fact that hitchhiking can be dangerous. As Adams fried fat sausages on a well-traveled pan, people told hitchhiking horror stories by the armload. There was the time Hansen's friend picked up a hitchhiker who pulled out a knife and stabbed her in the arm, dragging the knife down before she managed to kick the hitchhiker out of the moving car. Or the time one of Jamie's friends was almost killed by someone who picked her up. Then there were the more mundane hazards, such as being left in the middle of nowhere for days on end. Misery.

"Hitchhiking definitely has its harsh realities," said Hansen, who is a preschool teacher in Columbus when he is not traveling. "But I definitely think I can be a vagabond all the time if I didn't love my job."



Sumpter takes center stage in ‘Peter Pan’

By **ANTHONY BREZNICAN**
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—“Peter Pan” is about a boy who never grows up, but usually he’s played by women who are old enough to be his mother.

In previous live-action films based on the J.M. Barrie story, the mystical flying troublemaker was played by Mary Martin, Cathy Rigby and even Mia Farrow. But in the latest version, he finally is being played by an actual 12-year-old—Jeremy Sumpter.

“The director, P.J. Hogan, told me that, ‘Jeremy, you are Peter Pan. Just go in there and be yourself.’ So I just went in there being Jeremy,” he said.

So how does Jeremy describe himself? “Energetic, funny and going all over the place,” he said. “And hyper.”

The new film, which its makers describe as the most faithful to Barrie’s original 1904 play and later novel, emphasizes the puppy-dog romance between Peter and Wendy, the daydreaming young girl who ventures with Peter to the mythical world of Never Land.

Amid the mermaids, Indians and swordfighting, Wendy and her two brothers—bookish John and baby Michael, encounter the grumpy, embittered Captain



In search of his shadow, Peter Pan (Jeremy Sumpter) and Tinker Bell (Ludivine Sagnier) arrive at the Darling nursery window in Universal Studios’ “Peter Pan.”

AP

Hook, who represents the worst in grown-ups.

Like almost any kid, Jeremy, now 14, talks a little fast, fidgets like he has ants in the pants and sees life as full of exclamation points.

His family brought him to Los Angeles when he was 9 for some open casting calls. His first role was in director-star Bill

Paxton’s 2001 horror thriller “Frailty,” as the youngest son of a man who thinks the world is filled with demons.

Jeremy said his favorite part of making “Peter Pan” was hanging on wires for the flying scenes. “Sometimes they shoot you straight up four stories high, then they would drop me and I shoot out like this—

Whooooosh!—and I’d fly around the whole stage,” he said, rising from his chair. “I did all my own stunts except for one,” he added, raising his index finger.

Which one? “That, I’m not going to say. I even did one that could have killed me if I didn’t do it right ... well, not kill me, but it could have broken my ribs.”

Then there’s Tinker Bell.

Almost everyone knows the graceful Marilyn Monroe lookalike fairy from Disney’s “Peter Pan” cartoon. But Tinker Bell in the new movie is a little like the cartoon version’s grumpier, messier twin.

“She’s wild, she’s dirty—she’s quite rough,” said French actress Ludivine Sagnier, who plays the pixie like a female

version of Charlie Chaplin’s Little Tramp. “I didn’t want her to be too glamorous and too much of an adult. We don’t want her to be too sweet. We wanted Tinker Bell to be very clownish and cheeky.”

But the pixie isn’t all evil, Sagnier said. “It’s just that she only has room for one emotion at a time.”

‘O Brother’ producer climbs ‘Mountain’

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—When producer T Bone Burnett set out to make the soundtrack to the Civil War-era film, “Cold Mountain,” he drew as much from his love of rock ‘n’ roll as from traditional American music.

Burnett mixed period pieces with new songs written by contemporary rock artists Sting, Elvis Costello and Jack White of the White Stripes.

The challenge was to make the new songs sound authentic, and the old songs sound fresh.

“We did a lot of work, a lot of research,” Burnett said. “I can’t speak for Sting, but I can say Elvis and I both have been studying this music in different forms for a number of years, so the job was pretty clear.”

The movie, starring Nicole Kidman, Jude Law and Renee Zellweger, opened Christmas Day. It is an adaptation of the best-selling novel “Cold Mountain” by Charles Frazier and tells the story of a wounded Confederate soldier who walks home to the North Carolina mountains to find his sweetheart.

Recorded in Nashville and Los Angeles, the soundtrack consists of 19 Appalachian-flavored acoustic songs, most of them modern interpretations of traditional pieces.

White is the most prominent artist, taking the lead on five tracks, including the standards “Sittin’ on Top of the World,” “Wayfaring Stranger” and “Great High

Mountain.” He also wrote and performed “Never Far Away.”

Costello and Burnett co-wrote “The Scarlet Tide” and Sting wrote and sang harmony on the Gaelic “You Will Be My Ain True Love”—both performed by bluegrass artist Alison Krauss.

Krauss said the project was intimidating.

“‘Ain True Love’ is a really different type of song,” she said. “I had already heard Sting’s version, and it was so perfect I couldn’t help wondering, ‘How am I going to match that?’ You kind of have to separate yourself from it.”

Burnett sees no incongruity in rockers writing and performing Appalachian ballads. He said Costello and Sting are great composers, and White’s career reflects a deep knowledge of American music that includes country icons Johnny Cash and Loretta Lynn.

“To me, we were just making rock and roll,” Burnett said. “Rock grew out of this, out of rebellion and defiance and a spiritual quest.”

Two tracks—“I’m Going Home” and “Idumea”—feature Sacred Harp singing, a homespun musical form that predates the Civil War. Sacred Harp songs are performed in a group without any instruments and come from a tune book, “The Sacred Harp,” first published in 1844. The book uses a system of printed shapes to help untrained singers read the music.

The Sacred Harp songs were recorded at Liberty Baptist Church on Alabama’s Sand Mountain, a site chosen because of the church’s rich acoustics.

“We put out a call for everybody to meet at the Sand Mountain church and 80 or 90 people showed up from all over the country,” Burnett said. “We were there about eight hours and recorded 30 tunes.”

Burnett, a blues and rock musician who has produced albums by Costello, the Counting Crows and The Wallflowers, has visited American roots music before. He produced the “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” and Cajun-flavored “Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood” soundtracks.

“O Brother,” a collection of post-Civil War blues, country, bluegrass and gospel tunes, was a huge success, selling more than 6 million copies and winning a Grammy Award for album of the year.

Krauss, who also performs on the “O Brother” soundtrack, said acoustic music sounds fresh because it receives so little exposure on radio and television.

“I always said if people just had a chance to hear this music they would love it,” she said.

With its rootsy sound, “Cold Mountain” is bound to draw comparisons to “O Brother.” Burnett warns that listeners will find the music on “Cold Mountain” much darker.

tribune
subscription

Workers who make holidays happy deserve our thanks

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I'd like to thank all those generous people who work nights, weekends and holidays.

Without the help of the auto club operator who answered my call one Christmas morning (and the mechanic who showed up), I would have missed the joy of seeing my grandchild opening gifts.

We no longer argue about what everyone wants for Christmas breakfast because of the servers, chefs and busboys who give me the best present of all - more relaxed time with my family because everyone can eat what they want.

And let's not forget the emergency medical workers who are always there for childhood emergencies, all too often in the middle of the night or on holidays. Thanks, too, to the pharmacists who fill prescriptions when the establishments around them are closed.

I am grateful to everyone who gives up precious time with their own families and friends in order to make life easier for the rest of us.

Abby, thanks for printing this. I want all these generous people to know how appreciated they are, especially at holiday time. Bless you one and all.

GRATEFUL

DEAR GRATEFUL: Thank you for an uplifting letter. Counting our blessings is a wonderful way to start a new year, and you have mentioned only a few of our unsung heroes. Add to that our police, our firefighters, our brave young men and women in the military, and caregivers everywhere. They, too, are unsung heroes.

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Phil," and I lost a child two years ago on Christmas Eve. Before that Phil was always affectionate. Now he hardly shows his emotions at all, and doesn't tell me he loves me as often as he used to.

I love my husband with all my heart and want things the way they used to be. I think he is still hurting, but he refuses to get help. What should I do? Please help me.

LOVING HIM IN TENNESSEE

DEAR LOVING: It's clear that your husband is still grieving and has not been able to move on as quickly as you have. Since he refuses to go to grief counseling, go without him.

It may help you to understand that grief is an individual process, and perhaps it will better enable you to help him through it.

Please accept my deepest sympathy for your loss.

DEAR ABBY: I really need some help. When I was 15, my half-brother raped me. I am now almost 40. I want nothing to do with him, and I don't want him around my kids.

Abby, my half-brother keeps trying to call me. How can I make him leave me alone without anyone knowing what happened?

EMBARRASSED IN KENTUCKY

DEAR EMBARRASSED: Please stop protecting him with your silence. Contact a rape crisis hotline. It is long overdue and you can still benefit from post-traumatic stress counseling. You have no reason to be embarrassed or to keep this a secret. A rape victim is never at fault.

You can also install caller ID on your telephone and block his calls to stop the harassment. If that fails, talk to your lawyer about a restraining order.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)



Dear Abby

Films critics say 'American Splendor' best

NEW YORK (AP)—"American Splendor," the life story of a grumpy file clerk who attains cult celebrity status by becoming a comic book writer, took best picture honors at the National Society of Film Critics awards Saturday.

Clint Eastwood's working class crime drama "Mystic River" was second in the voting for best picture and Sofia Coppola's "Lost in Translation," a quirky tale of two Americans

finding friendship while in Japan, took third.

The group of 55 film critics met in Sardi's restaurant in Manhattan to announce this year's winners.

Eastwood got the nod for best director for "Mystic River;" Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini won best screenplay for "American Splendor;" and Bill Murray won best actor for "Lost in Translation."

Charlize Theron's perfor-

mance in "Monster" earned best actress honors, while Peter Sarsgaard was named best supporting actor for his role in "Shattered Glass."

Patricia Clarkson took the best supporting actress prize for two films: "The Station Agent" and "Pieces of April." Aki Kaurismaki won the award for best foreign language film as director of "The Man Without a Past." The society's pick for best nonfiction film was Nicolas

Philibert's "To Be and to Have."

The group also gave its "film heritage" awards to Kino on Video for its DVD collections of F.W. Murnau, Erich von Stronheim and the American Film Theater Series; and Milestone Film and Video for its theatrical and DVD presentations of Michael Powell's "The Edge of the World," E.A. Dupont's "Picadilly," Andre' Antoine's "La Terre," and Evgenei Bauer's "Mad Love" series.

Jolie funds program for Cambodian farmers

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—"Tomb Raider" star Angelina Jolie is funding a program to donate cows to poverty-stricken Cambodian farmers.

Three hundred families will get one cow each to help them earn money, hopefully dissuading them from logging and hunting wildlife for a living, said Mounh Sarath, director of the Cambodian Vision in Development project.

Jolie is giving \$1.5 million to the organization for its

environmental protection efforts in remote parts of northwestern Cambodia.

The 28-year-old actress is having a house built in Cambodia. She fell in love with the country when scenes for "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" were shot at the famed Angkor temple complex.

The project aims to protect about 148,200 acres of forest in the Samlaut and Pailin areas, both former strongholds of the Khmer Rouge regime that ruled Cambodia in 1975-79.

Rush guitarist says arrest was unfair

NAPLES, Fla. (AP)—The lead guitarist for the rock band Rush said his arrest at a New Year's Eve party was unfair.

Alex Zivojinovich - known on stage as Alex Lifeson - was arrested for what police described as drunken, violent behavior at the Naples Ritz-Carlton hotel. He faces six charges, including four felonies, the most serious of which carries a maximum sentence of 30 years.

"This gives new meaning to dinner at the Ritz," Zivojinovich, 50, said as he left jail Friday on \$14,500 bond, wearing the same black suit he wore to the New Year's Eve bash.

Zivojinovich said he didn't believe his arrest was fair. "They didn't like the way we were dancing, apparently," he said.

Also arrested were his son Justin Zivojinovich, 33, and his son's wife, Michelle Zivojinovich, 30.

According to authorities, the scuffle began when Justin Zivojinovich refused to leave the stage where the house band was performing. His father spat blood on a deputy's face and pushed a deputy down a hotel stairwell during the struggle, police said.

Justin Zivojinovich disputed that account and said deputies broke his father's nose.

Charges against Alex Zivojinovich include aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer, resisting an officer with violence, and disorderly intoxication.

Arraignment is set for Jan. 26.

Rush's hits include "Tom Sawyer," "Limelight" and "The Spirit of Radio."



AP Alex Lifeson of Rush performs during the concert for SARS relief at Downsview Park in Toronto in this July 30, 2003 file photo.



Jolie

Osbourne says he's giving up ATVs

LONDON (AP)—Singer Ozzy Osbourne says he has given up riding all-terrain vehicles after a crash twice caused him to stop breathing and left him in a coma for eight days, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Osbourne, 55, fractured his collarbone, eight ribs and a neck vertebra when the 600-pound vehicle he was riding flipped and landed on top of him at his estate in Buckinghamshire, southern England, on Dec. 8. He spent a week on a ventilator.

"When I woke I was so confused you could have told me I was upside down in a kilt and I'd have believed you," the former Black Sabbath frontman was quoted as saying in an interview with The Sunday Mirror. "I could have died or been paralyzed."

Osbourne, who posed for photographs at his estate wearing a neck brace and with his left arm in a sling, said he owed his life to bodyguard

Sam Ruston, who twice gave him mouth-to-mouth to restore his breathing.

The Sunday Mirror said Osbourne spoke quietly and was stumbling when he stood.

"I'm Ozzy Osbourne, rock and roller, but I can barely set foot outside my own front door," he said.

The tabloid said the singer checked himself out of the hospital on Christmas Eve and will remain in Britain with his wife, Sharon, until doctors say he is fit enough to fly back to his Los Angeles home.

Osbourne, who grew up in Birmingham, central England, rose to stardom with heavy metal group Black Sabbath in the 1970s before launching a solo career.

His fame grew hugely after he became the subject of the hit reality-TV series "The Osbournes." The MTV show featuring the rocker, Sharon and their children, Kelly and Jack, will begin its third season in January.

Pastimes

WONDERWORD®
By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BE KIND TO EACH OTHER

Solution: 11 letters

E	H	R	S	B	T	Y	L	P	T	C	H	E	E	R
R	T	S	M	S	L	S	L	A	R	H	E	A	R	T
A	Ⓕ	Ⓐ	Ⓛ	Ⓑ	E	E	S	O	U	L	A	E	R	E
H	O	S	L	W	H	T	S	G	S	T	E	N	U	E
S	S	P	E	E	D	R	S	T	C	U	R	K	W	
A	P	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	N	E	T	M	L	S
G	I	A	C	I	O	O	A	A	P	P	N	P	A	R
N	R	C	F	R	W	C	T	S	L	S	E	O	T	S
I	I	E	E	F	G	P	T	M	E	E	L	H	R	E
V	T	N	R	R	E	E	E	A	A	R	O	E	T	M
I	E	E	I	C	S	C	N	E	S	P	V	S	T	O
G	E	G	C	L	G	S	T	T	E	O	E	I	A	C
C	H	A	R	I	T	Y	I	L	N	N	V	C	L	
T	L	C	F	K	N	I	V	L	O	E	E	D	T	E
L	T	T	R	E	A	T	E	H	B	N	B	A	Y	W

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Acceptance, Advise, Affection, Assist, Attentive, Benevolent, Bless, Bliss, Call, Charity, Cheer, Courtesy, Encourage, Fair, Free, Generous, Gentle, Gift, Giving, Heart, Help, Honest, Hope, Hugs, Like, Lovers, Mutual, Nice, Peace, Please, Real, Relate, Respect, Right, Service, Share, Smile, Soft, Soul, Spirit, Sweet, Tact, Talk, Team, Thanks, Treat, True, Trust, Welcome, Wish, Word.

Last Saturday's Answer: Decorate

NOTE: Postage and handling charges have changed for The Collected Wonderword. Add \$3 for the first book ordered, \$1 more for each additional book. Volumes 17 and 18 are \$5.95 each, payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Send to WONDERWORD, 450 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call 816-452-1100, ext. 4610.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS
1 Bavarian peak
4 Troll-thwarting trio
9 Light brown
12 Retainer
13 Boredom
14 Lemieux milieu
15 House Speaker, 1977-87
17 Grand —, N.S.
18 Picks out of a lineup
19 Bounded
21 Chicken serving
24 Noun suffix
25 Onassis, to pals
26 CSA soldier
28 Laconic
31 Gladys Knight's backup
33 Mumblety- —
35 Logical
36 Sen. Kefauver

38 Stately tree
40 Capek play
41 Temple U. team
43 Half a saying re
45 Play-ground fixture
47 Chopper
48 — Baba
49 Insobriety
54 Fellow
55 Race place
56 Wager
57 Chang's brother
58 Handful at 55-Across

DOWN
1 Stern-ward
2 Wahine's neckwear
3 Energy
4 Sex
5 Ballroom dance
6 Singer DiFranco
7 Veil material
8 Mum
9 Irish town in a 1912 song
10 Farm fraction
11 Require
16 Lubricant
20 Experts

21 Part of a Super-man costume
22 "Exodus" author
23 Traversing the tulips?
27 Spelling contest
29 Warm and cozy
30 Architect
32 Stitches
34 "The Great One" actor
37 "Heathers" actor
39 Proverbs
42 Filch
44 Hunger-dreadth of a yen
45 Unaltered
46 Vivacity
50 Omega prece-der
51 Recede
52 Posei-don's bailiwick
53 Pigs' digs

Solution time: 24 mins.

S	A	C		W	A	C	O		B	A	B	A	
L	E	L		A	F	A	R		I	R	O	N	
I	R	A		F	O	A	L		N	E	O	N	
T	O	P	O	F	O	N	E	S	G	A	M	E	
				I	L	L	A	P	E				
O	Z	O	N	E		A	N	Y		A	L	E	
H	I	C	K		P	I	S		W	R	E	N	
O	P	T		P	O	D		A	H	E	A	D	
			S	I	P		A	M	A				
P	E	A	K		C	O	N	D	I	T	I	O	N
L	U	R	E		V	O	I	D		O	R	E	
U	R	G	E		E	N	O	S		T	A	X	
M	O	O	T		R	E	S	T		A	L	T	

Saturday's answer 1-5

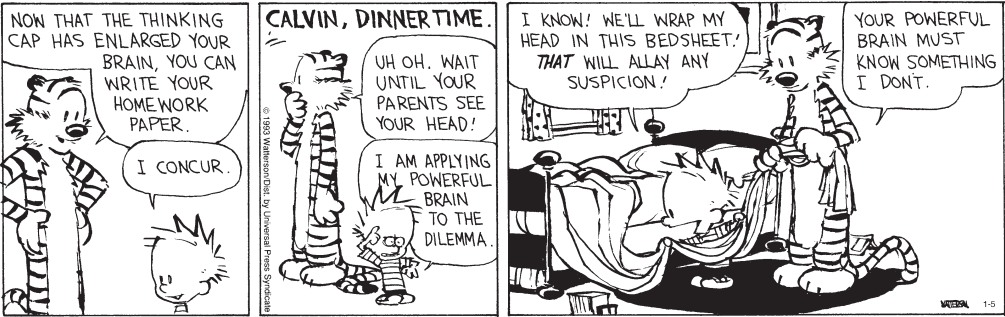
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
			18				19		20			
21	22	23					24					
25				26		27		28			29	30
31			32		33		34		35			
36				37		38		39		40		
		41			42		43		44			
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5951! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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Calvin and Hobbes

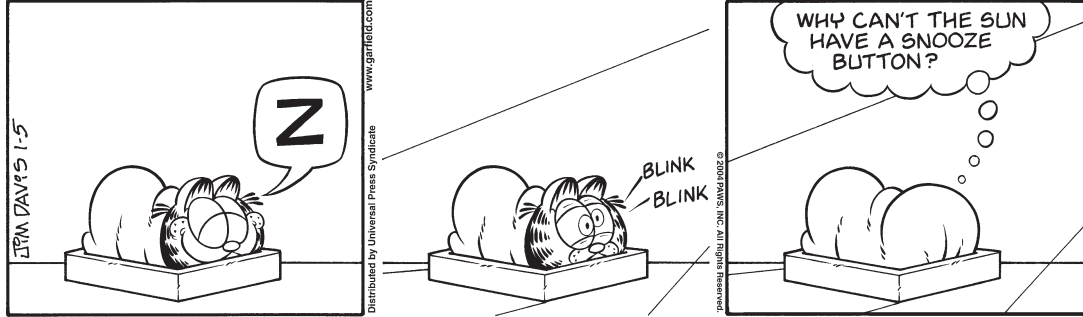


Adam@home



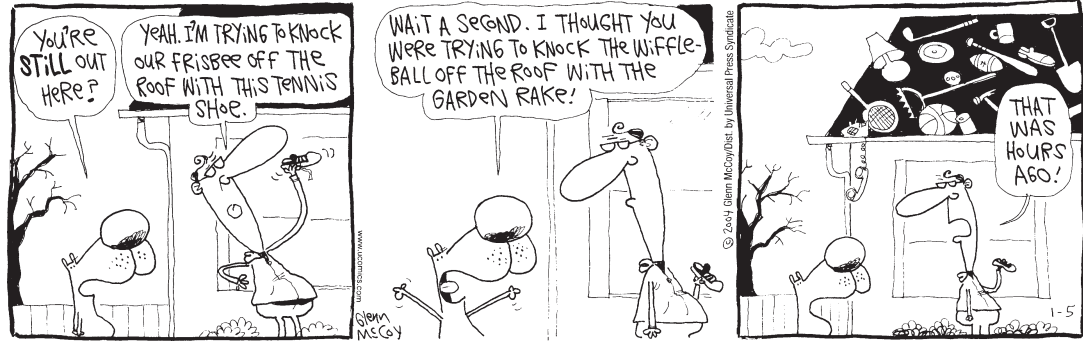
Garfield®

by Jim Davis



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



Team Standings		
Group A		
SIP-Verizon	4	0
Bayani	2	2
SMF	2	2
CCA	2	2
MDX	0	4
Group B		
Visminda	4	1
Cabalen	4	1
Mobil-LIPS	4	1
Bicol	1	3
MIFICPA	1	3
Samahang Laguna	0	5



Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T
Yankees	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	7
Academy	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	8

SPORTS BRIEFS

Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP SPORTS WRITER



PORTLAND, Ore.

(AP) — Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

Stoudamire finished with 25 points and eight assists for the Trail Blazers, who returned home to snap a three-game losing streak.

After Kobe Bryant's layup evened it at 99, Rasheed Wallace hit a pair of free throws to put the Blazers ahead, and Zach Randolph hit an 8-foot jumper to make it 103-99.

Shaquille O'Neal's layup narrowed it for the Lakers, but Stoudamire's 3-pointer put the Blazers ahead 106-101 with 2:08 left.

Stoudamire hit another one to put the Blazers up 109-104 but a pair of foul shots kept the Lakers in it until Wallace's jumper bounced several times before falling to make it 111-106 and Portland held on for the final margin.

Wallace, who stirred controversy with a contentious interview earlier in the week, had 28 points and seven rebounds to help Portland improve to 11-4 at home.

The night before, the Lakers fell to the Dallas Mavericks 110-93, their first loss at home in 13 games this season. The loss to Dallas snapped a 10-game overall winning streak.

Bryant led the Lakers with 35 points, and O'Neal had 22 points and 10 rebounds.

The Blazers, who led by as many as 10, jumped out to an early 13-6 lead on Randolph's

layup. Los Angeles narrowed it to 19-18 on Karl Malone's jumper, but Portland responded with Wallace's 3-pointer and Dale Davis' dunk.

After the Blazers took a 47-37 lead on Stoudamire's 3-pointer, the Lakers went on a 12-2 run to even it at 49, and the teams were even at 54 at halftime.

Bryant, who did not even take a shot in the first quarter, scored 11 points in the second.

The Lakers went up 70-67 on O'Neal's consecutive dunks, and led by as many as five points - but the Blazers kept it close and the two teams went on to trade the lead nine times in the third quarter.

Randolph had 24 points and 11 rebounds for Portland.

Wallace received a number of boos from the home fans when he was introduced before the game.

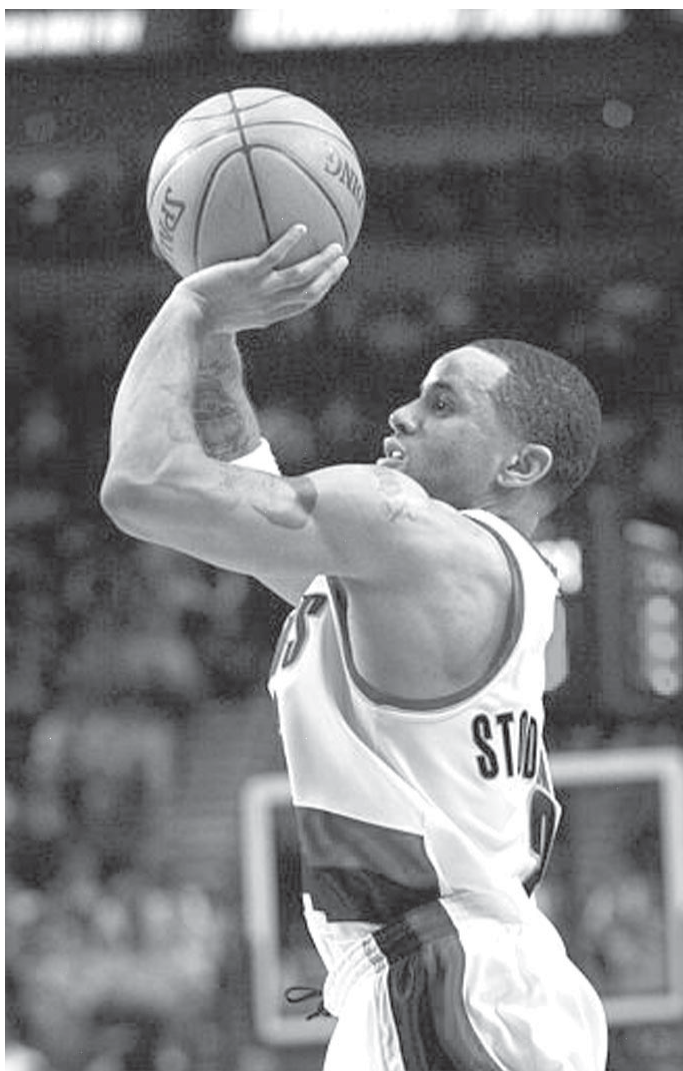
Wallace charged in an interview earlier in the week that the NBA's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself. He also used objectionable language.

There was widespread criticism of the comments, including a statement from NBA commissioner David Stern. Wallace issued an apology before the game, saying he regretted using the objectionable language but stood by his right to express his opinions.

Knicks 95, Nuggets 88

At New York, Antonio McDyess scored a season-high 15 points against the team that traded him nearly 18 months ago, leading the New York Knicks past the Denver Nuggets 95-88 to snap a six-game losing streak.

McDyess made his first start since March of 2002, replacing Kurt Thomas (sore knee) on New York's front line.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Damon Stoudamire shoots for two during the second half of their game with the Los Angeles Lakers Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Portland, Ore.

Carmelo Anthony led Denver with 25 points, and Marcus Camby added 12 points and 12 rebounds in his first appearance at Madison Square Garden since the Knicks sent him to Denver as part of the five-player trade that brought McDyess to New York.

Clippers 106, Suns 91

At Los Angeles, Quentin Richardson scored 25 points and Corey Maggette had 23 in the Los Angeles Clippers' 106-91

victory over Phoenix, the Suns' fifth straight loss.

Stephon Marbury had 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Suns.

Spurs 86, Rockets 73

At San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 16 points and Tony Parker had 14 points and 12 assists to help San Antonio beat Houston for the second time in three days, 86-73.

Steve Francis paced Houston with 17 points, 13 of them in the

second half. Yao Ming and Jim Jackson each had 11 points.

Bulls 86, Pacers 75

At Chicago, Jamal Crawford and Kirk Hinrich scored 18 points apiece and the Chicago Bulls used a 16-0 third-quarter run to beat the Indiana Pacers 86-75.

Indiana, tied for the most road wins in the NBA with nine, got 23 points from Ron Artest, including the Pacers' first 10 in a 15-point fourth quarter.

Grizzlies 110, Nets 63

At Memphis, Tenn., Bonzi Wells had 22 points in the Memphis Grizzlies' most lopsided victory in franchise history, a 110-63 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Memphis had six players in double figures, including Mike Miller and Swift with 18 each. Miller also had seven assists.

Pau Gasol had 12 points and nine rebounds, and Lorenzen Wright and Earl Watson had 10 points each.

Kenyon Martin led New Jersey with 12 points. Aaron Williams and Jason Kidd, with 4-of-14 shooting, had 10 points each.

Celtics 105, Cavaliers 98

At Cleveland, Paul Pierce scored a season-high 41 points and stole the ball from LeBron James in the final minute to help the Boston Celtics win their fifth straight game, 105-98 over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

James scored a season-high 37 points, but Cleveland's rookie star missed a 3-pointer in the last two minutes and was stripped by Pierce with 15 seconds to go.

Magic 105, Hawks 102

At Atlanta, Tracy McGrady capped a late rally with a 20-foot jumper, giving the Orlando Magic a 105-102 victory over

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	12	11	.522	-
Boston	12	12	.500	1/2
New Jersey	11	12	.478	1
New York	8	16	.333	4 1/2
Miami	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Washington	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Orlando	4	20	.167	8 1/2

Central Division

Indiana	18	6	.750	-
New Orleans	17	7	.708	1
Toronto	13	9	.591	4
Detroit	14	10	.583	4
Milwaukee	11	12	.478	6 1/2
Atlanta	7	18	.280	11 1/2
Chicago	6	16	.273	11
Cleveland	6	17	.261	11 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

Dallas	14	8	.636	-
Denver	14	9	.609	1/2
San Antonio	15	10	.600	1/2
Houston	13	9	.591	1
Memphis	13	9	.591	1
Minnesota	13	9	.591	1
Utah	12	10	.545	2

Pacific Division

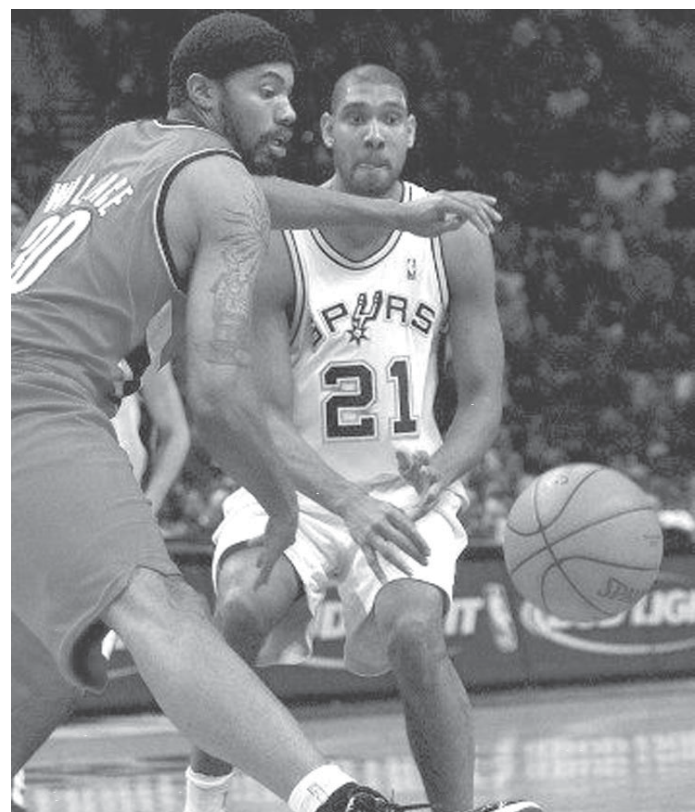
L.A. Lakers	18	5	.783	-
Sacramento	15	5	.750	1 1/2
Portland	11	10	.524	6
Seattle	10	10	.500	6 1/2
Golden State	10	11	.476	7
L.A. Clippers	8	11	.421	8
Phoenix	8	15	.348	10

By the Associated Press

the Atlanta Hawks.

Shammond Williams finished off the comeback with a steal and five free throws, helping the Magic win for the third time in four games after losing 19 straight. McGrady had 30 points.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim had 25 for the Hawks, who have lost seven of their last eight games. Stephen Jackson added 20 points and Dion Glover had 19.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace (30) tries to block a pass by San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan (21) during the second quarter in San Antonio, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2003.

Wallace apologizes for interview language

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP SPORTS WRITER

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace apologized Saturday for using objectionable language in an interview in which he criticized the NBA's "white establishment."

"I made a few comments that some people found objectionable," Wallace said in a statement. "Like everyone, I have a right to express an opinion, which I did."

"But, I regret using street language to express my opinion because everyone has focused on these few comments when I said other things. It was not my intent to offend anyone."

Wallace's statement, issued before the Blazers' game against the Los Angeles Lakers, was punctuated by his apology.

"So, if I offended any of my

teammates, fellow NBA players, the Trail Blazer fans and organization, I apologize," he said. "I have nothing more to say about this matter."

On Friday, NBA commissioner David Stern called Wallace's comments to The Oregonian newspaper "ignorant and offensive to all NBA players."

In a wide-ranging interview published Thursday, Wallace charged that the league's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself.

The 29-year-old Wallace said he's not like the younger players who get "caught up and captivated into the league."

"No. I see behind the lines. I see behind the false screens. I know what this business is all about. I know the commissioner of this league makes more than three-quarters of the players in this league," he said.

Some of Wallace's comments included objectionable language.

"Mr. Wallace's hateful diatribe was ignorant and offensive to all NBA players," Stern said. "I refuse to enhance his heightened sense of deprivation by publicly debating with him."

"Since Mr. Wallace did not direct his comments at any particular individuals other than me, I think it best to leave it to the Trail Blazers' organization and its players and fans to determine the attitudes by which they wish to be defined."

Wallace, in his eighth year with Portland, is set to earn nearly \$17 million this season. He is averaging 16.4 points and 7.3 rebounds.

Last season, Wallace was suspended by the league for seven games for threatening an official on the loading dock at the Rose Garden Arena after a game.

It was the longest suspension ever handed down that did not involve physical contact or substance abuse.

In the 2000-01 season, he set the NBA record with 41 technical fouls.

Wallace's comments are the latest problem to befall the Blazers, who have been plagued by player arrests and team infighting since last season.

"I agree with the commissioner that there is no reason to continue the public debate on this issue," Blazers president Steve Patterson said.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said that as a former player, he understands the idea of questioning authority, but said Wallace hurt himself by injecting race into the issue.

"It's not about the money, it's about the little things that go with the job that I think gets to some of the players," Jackson said.

Okla. QB Jason White wins Heisman Trophy

By JOSH DUBOW
AP SPORTS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Jason White capped a remarkable comeback with college football's most prestigious award, winning the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night a year after an injury nearly ended his career.

The Oklahoma quarterback, who almost quit football following his second major knee injury in September 2002, beat out Pittsburgh receiver Larry Fitzgerald by 128 points for the award.

"Last year about this time, I was sitting at home watching the Heisman and thought how neat it would be to be there, to be one of the finalists," White said. "I never thought, after two surgeries, that I'd be here."

White threw 40 touchdown passes and led the third-ranked Sooners to 12 straight wins to open the season and a spot in the Bowl Championship Series title game against No. 2 LSU.

Even a subpar performance in a loss in the Big 12 title game last week against Kansas State couldn't stop White from winning the award. His three months of brilliance before that were more than enough to persuade voters to pick him.

White, The Associated Press Player of the Year, led the nation in passing efficiency, completing 64 percent of his passes for 3,744 yards and only eight interceptions.

White beat Fitzgerald 1,481-1,353. Eli Manning was third with 710 points and Chris Perry was next with 341.

Voters list three choices on their ballots, and players are awarded three points for first place, two for second and one for third.

White, the first Oklahoma player

since Billy Sims in 1978 to win the Heisman, had 319 first-place votes, 204 seconds and 116 thirds.

Fitzgerald, who set an NCAA record with touchdown catches in 18 straight games, had 253 firsts, 233 seconds and 128 thirds. He was trying to become the first sophomore to win the award.

Manning became the third member of his family to come close but fall short for the Heisman. His father, Archie, finished fourth in 1969 and third the following year, while older brother, Peyton, came in second in 1997.

Manning, who passed for 3,341 yards with 27 touchdowns this season, had 95 firsts, 132 seconds and 161 thirds.

Perry, who was fifth in the nation with 132.4 yards rushing per game and also scored 19 touchdowns, came in fourth with 27 firsts, 66 seconds and 128 thirds.

Three of the four finalists struggled with their conference titles on the line, with only Perry delivering in a 204-yard, two-TD game in a 35-21 victory against Ohio State.

Just as one bad game didn't stop Oklahoma from making it to the Sugar Bowl, it also didn't stop White, who was helped by the 50 percent of voters who cast their ballots before that game. Fitzgerald got the most points from people who voted in the final week, but it wasn't enough to catch White.

White became the fourth Sooner to win the Heisman, joining Sims, Steve Owens (1969) and Billy Vessels (1952). Sims was sitting with his former coach, Barry Switzer, in the audience and yelled encouragement to White as he walked up to accept the award.

White is hoping to become the third quarterback to win the Heisman and the national title in the same season, joining Florida State's Charlie Ward (1993) and

Florida's Danny Wuerffel (1996).

Recent Heisman-winning quarterbacks haven't fared so well, with Florida State's Chris Weinke (2000) and Nebraska's Eric Crouch (2001) both following up their Heisman wins with subpar title-game performances.

Kansas State running back Darren Sproles was fifth, followed by Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart, North Carolina State quarterback Philip Rivers, USC receiver Mike Williams, Miami of Ohio quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and Texas Tech quarterback B.J. Symons.

A regional voting breakdown had White winning the Far West, Southwest and South regions. Fitzgerald won the Midwest, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

The award completes an amazing transformation that began on Sept. 7, 2002, when White crumpled to the turf against Alabama with a torn right knee ligament. He had injured the same ligament on the other knee a year earlier and contemplated quitting the sport he loves.

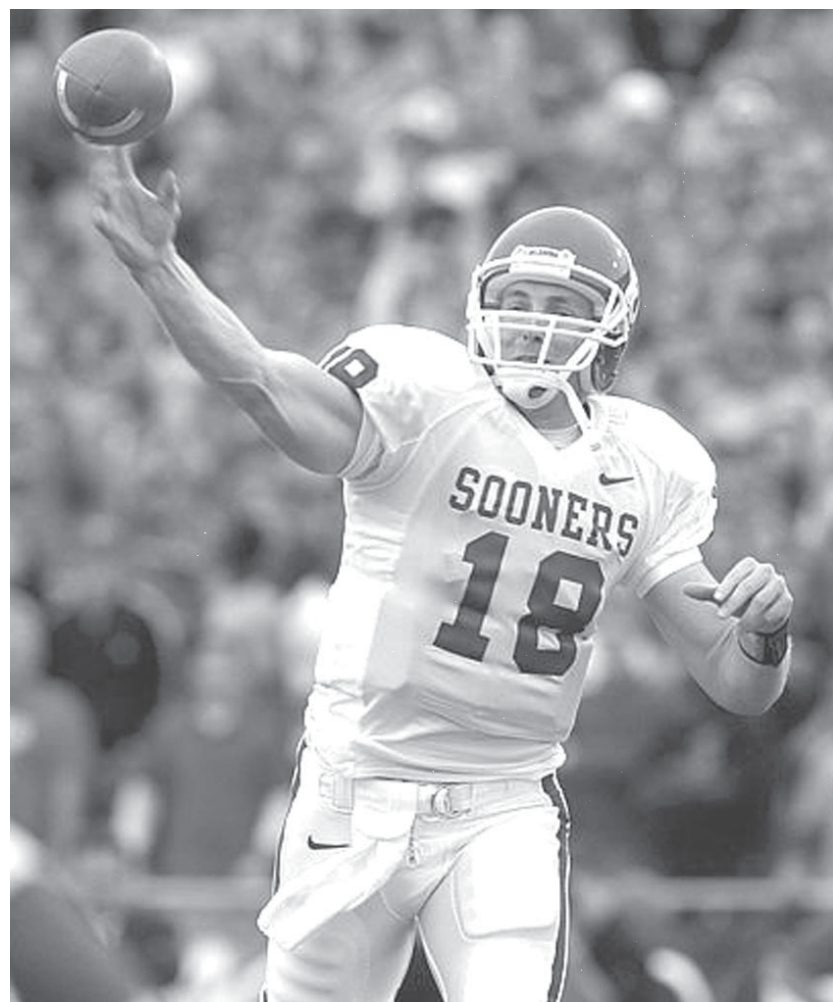
His father persuaded him not to give up and White soon began the hard road back.

"I wanted to be back on the field with my teammates," White said. "For a while, it didn't seem like it would happen."

Hours of rehab finally paid off when coach Bob Stoops told White he won a four-way competition for the job before the start of fall practice.

In a season where remaining healthy and keeping the starting job would have been a great accomplishment, White did so much more.

The small-town kid from Tuttle, Okla., quickly answered all those questions. Performing in stadiums with nearly 20 times as many fans as live in his home town, displayed the poise and



AP
Oklahoma's quarterback Jason White (18) passes in the first quarter against Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas, in this Nov. 22, 2003 photo. White won the 2003 Heisman Trophy, awarded Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003 in New York.

touch necessary to turn Oklahoma into a record-setting offense.

He threw at least two touchdowns in his first 12 games, including 13 in the three games before the Big 12 championship. His pinpoint accuracy helped his receivers break big runs after the catch and helped the team score at

least 50 points seven times this season.

"His emergence as a great, great football player is the story of college football," Stoops said. "The biggest difference in our team is that Jason White is the quarterback. It ought to be pretty obvious."

It turned out it was to the Heisman voters.

Red Sox sign Keith Foulke; Yanks get RHP Kevin Brown

By BEN WALKER
AP BASEBALL WRITER



NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The Boston Red Sox revved-up the AL East arms race by closing a deal for All-Star closer Keith Foulke on Saturday, hours before the New York Yankees completed their trade for Kevin Brown.

In a flurry of activity at the winter meetings, outfielders Mike Cameron, J.D. Drew and Juan Encarnacion found new homes.

Roger Clemens just may have one, too. In town for a function, he left open the possibility of coming out of retirement to pitch for the Houston Astros.

Cameron personally came to the fringe of the French Quarter this week, hoping to get a deal done. The free agent found one with the New York Mets.

The Yankees finalized their swap with Los Angeles, getting Brown for Jeff Weaver and two other players.

"To walk into a clubhouse that's going to be filled with people who have such a great history of playing winning ball, it's a great opportunity for me at the end of my career," Brown said.

Atlanta filled its need for a right fielder by obtaining Drew in a five-player trade with St. Louis. Desperate for hitters, Los Angeles acquired Encarnacion from Florida.



AP
American League pitcher Keith Foulke of the Oakland Athletics delivers in the ninth inning of the 74th annual All Star game, Tuesday, July 15, 2003, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago.

Foulke decided against re-signing with Oakland. Instead, the free agent reliever who led the AL with 43 saves last season reached agreement with the Red Sox on a deal that guarantees him \$24 million.

"I want to be a winner before I go out," Foulke said.

Foulke got a three-year deal with an option for a fourth season, completing

the contract after taking a physical.

"We acquired Keith Foulke not because he's a closer, but because we believe he's one of the best pitchers in baseball," Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein said.

Foulke joins starter Curt Schilling as top pitchers acquired by the Red Sox since the season ended. Boston also is talking about getting AL MVP Alex

Rodriguez from Texas in a trade for Manny Ramirez.

"It was a solid team before they added Curt Schilling. That really showed their commitment to winning," Foulke said.

The 31-year-old righty was 9-1 with and a 2.08 ERA for Oakland last season.

The Red Sox haven't won the World Series since 1918, with the Yankees often getting in the way. Since losing in this year's Series, the Yankees have traded for pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brown.

The Yankees also lost Andy Pettitte to Houston, and there remains a chance that Clemens might join him to pitch for the hometown Astros.

The Rocket was in New Orleans for a banquet and said that while he still considers himself retired, he's at least thinking about playing for Houston.

"I know Roger has told me he was retiring. That was our understanding," Yankees GM Brian Cashman said. "But I also understand he's a human being. We all have a chance to change our minds and that's life."

In a deal that's been brewing, the Yankees got Brown for Weaver, minor league pitcher Yhency Brazoban and a player to be named. Brown, 38, is a six-time All-Star.

After letting loose Gary Sheffield - who is close to going to the Yankees, too - the Braves wanted a right fielder with a good bat. They hope they found

one in Drew, getting him with all-purpose player Eli Marrero from St. Louis for pitchers Jason Marquis, Adam Wainwright and Ray King.

"Adam is our No. 1 pitching prospect and that was tough to do, but under the circumstances we had no choice," Atlanta GM John Schuerholz said.

Drew, 28, has been full of promise since becoming the fifth pick of the 1998 draft. But he's been hurt a lot, going on the disabled list five times in the last four years.

Drew hit .289 last season with 15 homers and 42 RBIs in 100 games.

"He's been a guy that has been touted with all kinds of talent through the years," Braves manager Bobby Cox said. "Unfortunately, he's had all kinds of injuries."

Cameron reached agreement with the Mets on a three-year deal for \$19.5 million. The former Gold Glove center fielder must pass a physical before the deal is done.

The Dodgers were eager to add offense after scoring a major league-low 574 runs last season. Encarnacion, 27, joined catcher Ivan Rodriguez, first baseman Derek Lee and closer Ugueth Urbina as players to leave the Marlins since they won the title.

Encarnacion hit .270 with 19 home runs and 94 RBIs last season. He had a team-high 37 doubles and also stole 19 bases. He hasn't made an error in his last 220 games.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Table tennis singles tourney tomorrow

The Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association is inviting the public to join the 2004 MATTA Open Singles Table Tennis Tournament.

The tournament will begin tomorrow and will continue throughout the rest of the month. It will be held Tuesday and Thursday nights at the multi-purpose room of the Gilbert C. Ada Ada Gymnasium.

The tournament format will be round-robin type of competition for the initial round where each participant will play all the other members of their division once.

Those who win the most games will move on to the elimination phase and playoffs.

Admission fee for the tournament will be \$10 per participant. Trophies will be presented to the winners of their respective divisions during an after-tournament dinner.

Children who wish to participate should inform their parents and ask for their consent. For more information please call Steve Lim at 483-7842.

21st Island Relay set for Dec. 28

Officials of the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay announced that this year's 13.7-mile team event is set to take place during the early morning hours of December 28.

The starting point of the course will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot. Participants will then head north and work their way to the finish line at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

Interested teams may register at the starting point of the race, which will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot in San Antonio. Registration begins at 5:15am.

Each team, which consists of five members, must switch runners every mile. It is also required that each team has at least one female participant or a participant who is under the age of 16 or in the senior division. Prior to competing, all teams must pay a fee of \$25.

For more information about the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay, please contact Elias Rangamar at 234-1001 or 1002.

Budweiser Cup on Jan. 12

Officials of the much-awaited Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands Budweiser Cup have decided to push back the kick of date of the 2003 island-wide men's basketball season to January 12 of next year.

So far, 10 teams have shown interest in participating in the league. Only eight, however, are confirmed to battle for the championship crown and the \$1,000 grand prize that goes along with it. Also at stake are the \$300 prize for the runner-up and the \$200 award for the second runner-up.

Each team interested in taking part in the season is required to pay an entrance fee of \$900 that must be payable to BANMI.

Aside from the prizes awarded to the top three finishers, other prizes may be claimed through a half-court shot competition and a three-point contest.

For more information, please contact Rangamar at 664-2500 or Abner Venus at 234-5911.

SPG Council launches logo contest

The South Pacific Games Council Executive Board has announced that it will be selecting a new logo for the SPG Council. The winning logo will be selected from designs submitted through the national sports federations represented on the Council.

The contest is open to everyone. The general public is invited to submit design proposals. The Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association will select one or more of the designs submitted to it, for transmission to the SPG Council.

All entries should be submitted to NMASA President Michael A. White. The selection of a new design will take place at the SPG Council assembly in Palau next year.

For further information, please contact White at telephone 234-6547.

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER



Boyett Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

The Olango, Zambales native triumphed three straight times after getting a bye in the opening round then turned back a courageous effort by Ike Celis to win the Tuesday 8-ball plum.

Sequioco first victimized Cherish Reyes in the second round before getting the better of Celis in the next round. He then slammed perennial pool winner Manny Mariano in the winners' bracket final to secure the first finals berth and the all-important twice-to-beat advantage.

Celis, for his part, had to work double time after being relegated to losers' bracket play by the crafty Sequioco.

The silver-haired Celis rebounded quickly and nicely by first beating Round Two owner Don Pangelinan. He then eliminated top lady player Rosemarie Moses-Arnold before moving on to the losers' bracket final opposite Mariano.

The outing against Mariano was where Celis truly shone, as the veteran pool player shocked the Filipino cue artist and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left: Third place Manny Mariano, Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament champion Boyett Sequioco, and runner-up Ike Celis.

arranged a championship round meeting with third round conqueror Sequioco.

Unfortunately for Celis his sparkling run apparently ran out in the deciding match against Sequioco, allowing the Hafa Adai security guard to come away with the weekly pool title. He won a handsome trophy and the \$40 top prize for his efforts.

Celis settled for the \$25 runner-up purse, while Mariano took home the \$15 third place

prize. All three men also got souvenir caps from Pacific Trading Co.

Other billiard players that graced the Tuesday 8-ball competition were Gary Ridley, Lars and Palacios.

The Round Two 8-Ball Tournament is held every Tuesday starting at 8pm and has an entry fee of \$10.

Round Two also regularly hosts two other pool tournaments through the course

of the week. Its winner-take-all pool tournament is held every Sunday starting at 1pm and costs \$5 to join.

On Thursdays, Round Two holds the exciting Miller Lite Invitational 8-Ball Tournament starting at 8pm. Entry fee is \$15 on regular days but goes up to \$25 every last Thursday of the month.

For more information on Round Two's tournaments, please contact Don Pangelinan at 234-6930.

ROCBALL

From Page 28

WATTS, wrote that that the program, which features shows on different sports from around the world, would like to attain footage, pictures, and information of Rocball for airing.

Feger also confirmed that he will send a couple of videotapes, information about the history of the sport, rules, and several articles and news clippings to Chimienti.

Eurosport reaches over 95 million homes in 54 countries.

Also being attracted to the sport is Brian Meredith, an operation manager for CrackerJax, a sports-theme

amusement park in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Meredith stated in his letter to Feger that he is currently searching for ways to make their three volleyball courts useful, and was intrigued after coming across some information about Rocball while browsing through the Internet.

Meredith added that he is trying to modify the courts to Rocball standards and is working towards starting a Rocball league.

"I can't believe that nobody in America plays this sport," Meredith stated.

Last year, Feger scheduled a special match featuring 2001 and 2002 champions DX and Jammers, which was taped and

sent to the Fox Sports Show "You Gotta See This." Fox Sports Show's Associate Producer Eric Hopkins expressed his interest in the sport. Camera crews were set up at courtside and on the roof of the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

He also sent a couple of videotapes, written information, and graphics to the Rocball Federation of India.

In related news, the World Organized Rocball Inter-scholastic and Community League's 2004 season is set to get underway on January 12.

Teams will engage in several practice rounds prior to seeing battle in the preliminary rounds, which is expected to kick off just

a couple of weeks later.

All interested players are encouraged to begin organizing squads for the league, which unlike other sporting events, doesn't require an entrance fee.

All matches will be played at the Marianas High School Green Court. Should Mother Nature interrupt with wet showers, matches will be played at the school's gym.

Feger began organizing and writing about the sport while in Japan in 1979. After two years of experimenting, the sport finally progressed into a tournament in 1983.

For more information, please contact Feger at 664-3810 or 288-8722.

LOVE

From Page 28

on the next two holes, then easily reached the par-5 11th with a 5-iron to set up his fourth straight birdie.

"I had my pompoms out, cheering him on," Woods said. "I told him on the 10th tee I was two ahead. He said, 'How's that?' I told him I was getting a stroke a hole."

Love smiled when asked about Woods' comments.

"I didn't want to stick my hand in the cage and ask him if he wanted strokes," Love said.

Indeed, Love put seven shots between him and Woods over the first nine holes, and it left himself in great position to become the

first repeat winner of the Target World Challenge since Woods created it five years ago.

Love won in 2000 with a 64 in the final round.

It would be a great way to end his best season on tour. Love won four times, and no victory bigger than his final-round 64 at The Players Championship on a cold, windy day at Sawgrass.

While this tournament only counts in the bank - \$1.2 million of the \$5 million purse going to the winner - a victory would be meaningful coming against a 16-man field of high-ranked players and three of the four major champions.

Plus, Love has played the last two rounds with Woods, a

situation that in the past hasn't allowed him to play his best.

Love has worked all year to worry about only his own game. In fact, he was having dinner with friends Friday night when they told him to beat Woods.

"K.J. is the guy to beat right now," Love said. "People don't see it the way we do. You've got to beat the golf course."

Harrington missed a 3-foot par putt on the final hole for a 70 and was in third place at 211, six shots behind. Masters champion Mike Weir, who opened with a 75, had a 3-under 69 and was at 212.

Choi is making his first appearance in the final event of the year, and would like nothing

better to end his season with a victory - even though it doesn't count in the record books and won't get him back to Kapalua.

"It would be even better ... because of the field," Choi said.

Catching up to Love could require a great round, especially the way Love is playing. The calm, warmer conditions allowed the ball to travel farther and the power hitters to play more aggressively.

Love's only bogey came on a three-putt from 15 feet, when his eyes saw only the hole and not the speed of the putt; he ran it 8 feet by and missed the par putt.

"Other than that, I felt like I could make birdie on every hole," Love said. "And I almost did."

IT'S CBALEN

From Page 28

fouling out.

In the first game, the UFO All-Stars finally notched a win after beating Bicol Express-RNV Construction 53-44.

First Game

UFO All-Stars 53—Mendiola 20, Malasarte 13, Pardinan 10, Gatdula 6, Canedo 4.

Bicol-RNV Construction 44—Jugos 15, Aldan 10, Abadilla 6,

Lopez 6, Miday 5, Mumar 2.

Second Game

Cabalen-RP Construction 121—Mendoza 25, Delos Reyes 35, Ocampo 13, Alipio 12, Arnedo 12, Jo. Gatdula 6, Magcalas 5, Sinca 3, Barbo 2.

SIP-Verizon 103—R. Alegre 19, Mendoza 18, Guiab 14, Factor 13, Rapanut 13, Villacrusis 9, T. Alegre 7, Tamondong 5, Flores 3, Garcia 2.

Scoring by quarters: 24-27, 59-50, 90-79, 121-103.



Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

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28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

It's Cabalen against Visminda

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER

RP Construction dethrones SIP, 121-103

Cabalen-RP Construction reaffirmed their mastery over SIP-Verizon dethroning the three-time defending champion with a 121-103 rout Sunday night that secured them a finals ticket opposite Visminda-Country House in the 2003 UFO Miller Lite Cup championship.

The Transamerica-backed squad atoned for a shaky start, which had them trail SIP-Verizon 27-24 after the opening quarter, with a terrific second quarter.

Big man Ronald Delos Reyes, the goat in Cabalen's 103-108 loss to Visminda last week, came back strong and hit a couple of triples in the second stanza to start the fireworks for Cabalen.

Youthful center Ryan Mendoza, meanwhile, complemented Delos Reyes' sharpshooting ways by scoring 12 points from point blank range also in the second quarter.

The combination of efficient outside shooting and strong inside play translated to a 59-50 halftime advantage for Cabalen.

SIP-Verizon, whose players

came in late due to a mix-up in scheduling, continued to take on water and struggled mightily in the second half.

Cabalen's aggressive game had their opponents on the defensive during the early part of the third period. Another 3-pointer by Delos Reyes at the 8:03 mark of the quarter gave Cabalen its biggest lead so far at 68-54.

A few plays later, Mendoza struck again on the inside to pad their edge further at 72-54 with 6:47 remaining in the period.

Following a putback by Delos Reyes on a miss free throw off a 3-point opportunity by Mendoza, the score stood at 89-68 with less than two minutes left in the third.

But SIP-Verizon was far from gone and retaliated with an 11-3 burst to close the quarter that cut their deficit to 90-79.

Cabalen's Mendoza also chipped in to SIP-Verizon's cause, inadvertently making a layup on SIP-Verizon's basket after an inbound play following a timeout with 31 ticks to go.

The big end-game rally, however, didn't materialize for SIP-Verizon as Cabalen

thwarted all attempts at an uprising and maintained their healthy lead all throughout the final quarter.

There were still a lot of scary moments though. With Cabalen up 96-84, SIP-Verizon forward Gary Rapanut missed a routine layup that could've cut the lead to 10 points.

At the 5:31 mark of the game Edsel Mendoza missed two tries from the free throw line and in the succeeding SIP-Verizon offensive, newly arrived Leo Factor missed the bonus free throw on a 3-point play that could've slashed Cabalen's lead again to 10 points.

With SIP-Verizon still within striking distance swingman Junar Guiab was hit with his fifth personal foul with 4:05 to go. Shortly after Factor followed him to the showers.

Playing-coach Rick Alegre's coast-to-coast layup made it 108-97 with 2:52 left in the game but that appeared to be SIP-Verizon's last gasp as Cabalen went on a 9-2 tear highlighted by an off-balanced 3-point play

by Randy Arnedo that, for all intents and purpose, sealed the game at 117-99 with 1:33 remaining.

Mendoza earned Miller Lite MVP of the Game honors after scoring

35 points, which was the same output submitted by Delos Reyes. Veterans Alex Ocampo, Jun Alipio added 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Rick Alegre topscored for SIP-Verizon with 19 points. Edsel Mendoza chipped in 16 points and Guiab 14 before

See ITS CABALEN on Page 27



Rocball gains interest yet again

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER



Saipan's very own sport, Rocball, is steadily gaining more interest from the outside world.

This was learned late last week after founder and organizer James Feger announced that he has received e-mails from a couple organizations, Eurosport TV and a sports amusement park in Arizona, interested in gaining more information about the sport.

Eurosport, the most widely available sports channel in Europe, has made contact with Feger and has shown interest in learning more about the sport for future broadcasting.

In an e-mail letter to Feger, Pablo Chimienti of Eurosport's weekly program

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Love pulls away from Tiger at Sherwood

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER



THOUSAND OAKS, Calif.

(AP)—Davis Love III made four straight birdies to leave Tiger Woods in the dust and pull away from a world-class field Saturday, finishing with a 9-under 63 to build a three-shot lead in the Target World Challenge.

Despite a bogey on the par-3 17th, Love tied the tournament record set last year by Pdraig Harrington in the third round. Harrington built a record six-shot lead and hung on to win against Woods.

Love, at 11-under 205, only had a three-shot margin over K.J. Choi (65), although he won't have to worry about Woods.

As most of the leaders were posting birdies on a sunny, benign afternoon at Sherwood, the tournament host gave up ground with a three-putt bogey



AP

Tiger Woods reacts to his approach shot on the 18th hole during the third round of the Target World Challenge, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

on No. 3 and then hit his tee shot into the water for a bogey on the next hole.

Woods lost all hope on the final hole, hitting off the pine

straw and coming up well short, into the water, and he had to make a 15-footer for bogey. He had a 72 and was nine shots back at 214.

Meanwhile, Love played some of his best golf since early in the year. "I was confident all day," Love said. "I'm getting more and more comfortable playing with Tiger and around the lead."

Love was tied with Choi and Justin Leonard when his 4-iron on the difficult par-3 8th climbed just enough to hop into the fringe and stop about 6 feet above the hole for one of only two birdies in the round.

Love holed putts of 20 feet and 15 feet for birdies

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